THE

SPIRIT

OF

"THE BOOK;"

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF

CAROLINE

PRINCESS OF HASBURGH,

A Political and Amatory Romance.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

EDITED BY

THOMAS ASHE, Esq.

The Second Edition.

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LETTER XLVII.

You have a right to expect, my Charlotte, that my first voyage would have abounded in incident, and in consequence, have furnished me with a variety of interesting matter, for the employment of the pen, or for the amusement of the mind, but I assure you, there is a considerable degree of uniformity in a sea-voyage; and, as the conversation at the table of C——n P———e, was principally confined to politics, or rather to Buonaparté, I was supplied with few materials worthy to be recorded in these my extraordinary, and perhaps, interesting memoirs.

Politicians, however, as the party were, it required but little penetration in me to discover their ignorance on many subjects of foreign polity, and more particularly their complete misconception of the character and capacity of Buonaparté. The *eclát* of his name, and the rapidity of his victories, made so forcible an impression on the minds of some of the party, that nothing would satisfy them but to elevate him above Alexander the Great; while others, from the reported tyranny of his nature, and the principles, or cause they themselves espoused, could scarcely find words to sink his estimation, or to exhibit him in colours sufficiently infamous and black.

As it is proper, my dear child, that your opinion of public characters should not be formed from the prejudiced opinions of the E——h, I shall, from time

to time, give you a few prominent portraits, and having nothing better to perform for the present, I shall this day remit to you my remarks on Napolean Buonaparté, and in my next, I shall conclude the voyage commenced in my last.

A series of success having obtained for Buonaparté the character of a great General, I found the principal portion of C——n P——e's company disposed to blaze his name, and, as I have just observed, in this enthusiasm of feeling, not to be satisfied with no less a man to compare him to, than Alexander the Great. But, surely, they must be little acquainted with the character drawn of the Grecian hero by all his biographers, as well as very regardless of the principal and recent events of Buonaparté's life, to degrade the former by such a comparison; perhaps, there is

no feature in their characters to assimilate, save ambition—but you will understand that Alexander's ambition, was founded upon heroic principles, whereas Buonaparté's is established upon intrigue, dissimulation, ingratitude, and personal vanity. But the following exhibition of the leading traits of both characters, will best support this opinion.

ALEXANDER. Fidelity and gratitude, were strongly marked in Alexander. He not only rewarded those virtues in his own subjects, but practised them towards captive kings, often accompanied with a liberality that rendered their dominions more extensive than they were before.

BUONAPARTE. Though educated at an academy, and at the expence and under the direction of Louis XVI.; in

the very ardour of youth, when the passions of fidelity and gratitude are generally at the flood, deserted his royal master; pursued him to the scaffold, and turned his arms against the religion and laws of his country.

ALEXANDER. When Alexander married Roxana; if he could not by the powers of persuasion, he could at least by force of arms, have made her his mistress; yet he nobly abstained from either duplicity, or violence, and sought her affection only in an honorable manner.

BUONAPARTE. Though an officer of some rank, and constantly with the words honor and delicacy in his mouth, married, in the prime of youth, the cast-off Mistress of Barras, apparently upon no other principle but that base and sordid one, of gaining promotion

at the expence both of sentiment and honor.

Alexander. In the career of Alexander's victories, he held out no promises which he did not fulfil; nor oppressed the conquered after defeat, except irritated by very particular and aggravating circumstances. When he took Porus prisoner, after a hard fought battle, on the banks of the Hydaspes, he asked him, how he liked to be treated? "Like a king," replied Porus. 'And hast thou nothing else to demand?' said Alexander. "No!" returned Porus, "in the word king every thing is comprehended." Alexander so far from being offended with this frankness, suffered him to govern his own kingdom as his lieutenant, and added to it several provinces, with a considerable number of towns and villages.

Buonaparte. Though called by his partizans the conqueror of Italy, he may truly be called the betrayer and plunderer of Italy; so far from respecting kings, at one time, the very name was an object of abuse and extermination. Through all the states which he passed, liberty, alliance, or an amelioration of their former government, was the language of his declarations and manifestoes: but no sooner were the people seduced by those high sounding phrases, than their governments became subject to the military despotism of his army, and their exchequers seized to carry on further revolutionary systems.

Alexander. Amongst the various prisoners of war, taken by this victorious Prince, none has been more the object of history, nor has set his character in a more amiable light, than his conduct to the unhappy Darius, and

the females of his unfortunate family. When he first heard of the captivity of the latter, he immediately dispatched one of his principal officers to tell them, 'that DARIUS was not dead, and that they need not fear any ill usage from Alexander; on the contrary, that they should find themselves as well provided, as ever they were in DARIUS's most flourishing condition, when his empire was entire.' He was as good as his word; he treated these illustrious prisoners according to their rank, their sex, and their virtues; gave them liberty to bury whom they pleased of the Persians; allotted them what garments and furniture they thought proper, and allowed them larger pensions for their maintenance, than ever they had before. He would not suffer them to hear, or receive, or even so much as to apprehend any-thing indecent, or to the prejudice of their ho-

nor; ' so that they seemed rather lodged in some holy temple, where they enjoyed their privacy sacred and uninterrupted, than in the camp of an enemy.' Upon the capture and death of DARIUS, he behaved with the same dignity and humanity, taking off his own coat to cover the dead body, and afterwards embalming it, that it might be sent to his mother with all the pomp and ceremony suitable to his high quality, and flattering to the feelings of his relatives.

BUONAPARTE. What has been the conduct of Buonaparté to his illustrious captive the Pope? When he first entered the Roman dominions, he addressed that unfortunate pontiff, both in his letters and manifestoes, with all the appearance of a zealot warmly attached to the cause of religion, and the sacred character of the head of the church.

Having lulled him with this vile hypocrisy, he proceeded unmolested to Rome; where, under his direction, and by those immediately under his command, the whole civil government of the CAPITOL was overturned, by creating mock consuls, a senate, &c. composed of French republicans, under colour of restoring to the unhappy Romans the long lost privileges of their original ancestors. This mockery was scarcely established, when he began by raising heavy contributions on the inhabitants of the whole province, then, by banishing the cardinals, and seizing upon their effects; and finally giving notice to the pope, that he must quit his chair and dignity, with all his temporalities in three days time. The very advanced age and blameless life of this pontiff, added to the very high respect paid by all Europe, for the space of above four centuries, to his sacred

office, one would think would arrest the ordinary plunderers, from such gross and unmanly insult. No; a government of terror and plunder was to be carried on, and Buonaparté, by his Generals, felt no difficulty in the execution. This venerable old man, dignified by the titles of a temporal Prince, and head of the catholic church, at the age of eighty-two, and in the middle of winter, was not only stripped of his all, even to the ring of St. Peter, but obliged to make forced journeys, and to get out of his dominions as fast as possible.

Alexander. Though no one knew the dignity of his high situation better than Alexander, still in the midst of his love of glory, and the pursuit of it, he shewed a solidity of judgment, and temperance of expression, which highly redounded to his honor. He gave

no disparaging account of his enemies; anticipated no victories, nor spoke of himself in high sounding bombastical language! If we except his calling himself the son of Jupiter, which perhaps was more on a political, than a vainglorious principle, there are many traits of humility in his character, very conspicuous, such as his replying to DIOGENES the cynic, and the reproofs he submitted to from his generals and confidants.

BUONAPARTE. Has been the bombastical herald of a bombastical government; anticipating victories which he never obtained, or tried to obtain; now calling his armies, 'the armies of the ocean, the army of England, the army of Ireland, &c. &c.' Armies which he never led in person; and to the only place where others have dared to lead them, they have met with disgrace and

final overthrow. Even after his defeat in Egypt, he wantingly exclaimed, 'that fortune only changed because he had no further occasion for her services.' He has since expressed a contrary opinion.

ALEXANDER. Always kept up the ceremonies of the religion he was bred in, with punctuality and sincerity himself, and made it respected by the whole of his armies.

BUONAPARTE. Has a very convenient religion, suited to all situations and purposes. When he wanted to deceive the pope, he was a good catholic and a respecter of persons: when he had him in his power, he was a heretic and a plunderer: and when he wanted to deceive the Egyptians, he was a mussulman, and was as piously engaged in celebrating their *fêtes*, as he was in

celebrating mass in Italy. In short, he is, in a corrupt sense, ‘ all things to all men:’ Money and power, and dominion are to be obtained; and if they cannot be obtained without fraud, violence, and apostacy, Buonaparté will exercise fraud, violence, and apostacy, without scruple or remorse.

Alexander. Alexander, satisfied with having accomplished the most arduous undertakings, led his army by land back to Persia. The command of his fleet, with a considerable body of troops, he left to Nearchus, who, after a coasting voyage of seven months, conducted it up the Persian gulph into the Euphrates, with extraordinary skill, and the most perfect security.

Buonaparte. He had scarcely landed in Egypt, when his fleet, one of the greatest and most powerful that perhaps

was ever fitted out of France in the meridian glory of its monarchy, was, by the commanding spirit, the vigilance and dexterity of Admiral Nelson, and the brave men and officers under his command, entirely destroyed, and scarce a man left to report the disgraceful tidings of their defeat. As to Buonaparté, instead of finding a friend in the Grand Siegnior, he met him as his professed and declared enemy, and instead of leaving Egypt in triumph and in prosperity, he run from it in disguise, in terror, and despair.

To sum up the two characters: Alexander, it must be confessed, had a boundless ambition, but then it was blended with so many virtues, that they in a great measure palliated his lust of dominion.

BUONAPARTE. Has a similar ambition for conquest; but it is alternately effected like the conquests of the hyæna and tyger, by dissimulation and violence. I could add to the strength and justness of this contrast, were I to follow Alexander through all those bright and heroic actions, which manifested him to be a General of a noble and military genius; and were I to pursue BUONAPARTE through all that dark maze of cunning and intricate policy, which has also made him the terror and astonishment of the civilized world; but I have said sufficient for your information, and therefore, conclude with being, &c.

CAROLINE.

LETTER XLVII.

The political conversations of our nautical party received a fortunate interruption by the cry of 'land! land! That is, we had no sooner made the coast of S——k, than every observation turned on the superior excellence of E———d, and the proud pre-eminence it maintains over all the other countries of Europe.

Of this, I was not competent to judge from a distant and transient view of the S——k coast, but on entering the T——s and sailing up to G———h, I confessed, that beyond contradiction, E——d merited in a supreme degree the superiority it claims over all other nations.

The day of my passage up the river was extremely fine, and the sun shed that mild and mellow effulgence, which renders a country so truly picturesque, by at once charming and intoxicating the senses. The banks on either side, in addition to their permanent inequalities, strong contrasts of livid hue and lucid verdure, combined the variegated prospect of verdant pastures and flavid fields of corn; than which view of it one cannot easily imagine another more impressive, or more interesting. Our blessed Saviour himself condescended to admire this scenery, when he said to his disciples, "lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." With us they are yellow to harvest: but they may be white in Palestine. I care not how expositors expound the point, it shews clearly, my Charlotte, our Saviour to have been a personage of consummate

taste, as well as of transcendant wisdom and virtue, and that is the sole conclusion with which we are at present concerned.

Together with the farinaceous vegetables, those of the ligneous, garden, and forest species, have a large share in decorating the banks of this magnificent river. Indeed it is impossible even for the pencil to paint, much more for my feeble pen to describe the diversity, the almost infinite diversity, which the multitudinous and chequered scenes of this water display. They again altered the scene by every motion and tack of the vessel, or appeared to whirl along the ground, like the vortices of the astronomer, in proportion as our ship increased its velocity, through the influence of the returning tide.

The annual process of vegetation was not finished. Nature had not exhausted her productive energies, at the time I describe, but like a munificent mother, she was preparing to pour her manifold blessings into the arms of her children, eager to receive them. She was filling the horn of plenty to supply their necessities. The down of the thistle was yet able to resist the passing breeze, and the first of the foxgloves was rising from the sandy knoll. The nuts of the hasel were beginning to form, and the early apple-bloom to receive those streaks of red which we admire so much on beauty's cheek.

No sooner, therefore, did the rising sun adorn the balconies of the east, and diffuse his refulgent beams over the fruitful land, than the villagers and swains, who lived by the sweat of their brow, were seen repairing to their respective functions.

Accordingly some were engaged in corn fields, and some in gardens, and hop plantations; some were employed in the sunny meadow, and some in the shady grove; here the tawny stripling was driving his team of horses, and there the canorous damsel was milking, but not with snowy fingers, the full-uddered cow, whose lowing was repeated by the numerous herd, impatient of confinement from their rich pastures.

The genius of the farmer, too, exerted itself with uncommon fervor and felicity; like a vital principle it descended to his sons and his daughters, his man servants and his maid servants, the cattle and the stranger within his gates.

The whole country was animated with the spirit of industry, every one

of its active inhabitants was busy, as the busy insect proposed by the royal moralist as a pattern and reproof to the ignominious sluggard.

Happy people! if they knew their happiness, and how much they are diverted and delivered from criminal wishes and destructive practices, by the same rural means which repel want and preclude sickness.

To contemplate the simple, yet important operations of the inhabitants of the banks of the T——s, must surely be highly pleasing to every mind. Industry appears the law of those inhabitants, as well as the ornament of their life; it is, in fine, the source of their wealth, the parent of their independence, the preserver of their innocence, and the companion of their wisdom.

But alas! this rural passion is not general. The crowded, bustling, and licentious towns of S———ss, G———d, W——h, D———d and G———h, dispel the bright delusion, and present a contrast too horrible to be conceived.

Those places are filled with the victims of commercial avarice and national ambition: with men who strive to rise upon the ruins of society, and with wretches who are trodden under foot—the servile instruments of all the little and malignant passions of human nature.

From this contrast it would appear, that one part of the B——h people presume to deride nature, and another to despise art. And this difference of opinion, I fear, they carry to a dangerous extreme.

Nothing can be so unnatural as the state and struggle of society, in the towns I first passed by, and nothing less polished or refined, than the rural community which I have just described to you.

The E——h should remember, that nature is the model; and they should remember, also, that art employs itself in praise-worthy imitation: they should keep the idea of nature, as the idea of perfection, before their eyes, as the standard by which they should measure right from wrong. But sure am I, that nature ceases to be an object of admiration at G———h, and that, as to L——n, it is either wholly disregarded, or totally unknown.

How a people accounted so wise and virtuous can preclude nature, and subsist in an entire artificial state, is to me an object of the truest astonishment!

Nature, the whole body of created things, presents an assemblage of objects, surely, more worthy attention than the productions of art. As an animal, whom it behoves to make provision for his wants, no persuasive to the study of nature should be necessary; necessity and the rich rewards of assiduity, should stimulate him; and the shepherd and the husbandman on the banks of the T——s, should convince him that nature resides with them, but never in cities and towns. But the E——h advocates of commerce and arts, tell me, that the intellectual powers of man, require other sources of enjoyments;—I reply, that these, too, nature can supply. Here, curiosity can never want a motive; here, all the pleasures of tender feelings, or sublime conceptions, may be enjoyed. Assuredly, my Charlotte, the Deity designed that man should thus enjoy

himself. For nature is made to conform in some degree to the hand of man, and resist only when his ignorance violates its essential order: it yields its secrets to his enquiries. To his sensibility it presents the most engaging images; and remains, to all ages, a picture perpetually renewed, of the primitive creation of God.

Were the whole human race depraved, and nothing but falsehood left in society; on nature, the true character of the Deity would still remain impressed: there the innocent might still find enjoyment, the unhappy consolation, and the despairing hope. Its placid scenes calm the feelings, its grand ones exalt them; and neither of these states of mind are compatible with crime. Assuredly, nature, not only that the motives of wickedness are absent from its haunts, but also by

its salutary influence on the nerves, is designed to have a beneficial effect on the moral character of man.

I might have continued in this state of contemplation till our landing at G———h, had not a sudden change in the weather diverted my attention to other subjects.

I was informed by C——n P——e, that the climate of E——d is exposed to very extraordinary vicissitudes. Indeed it would appear so, for on the day of my approach to G———h the morning was fine, the noon rainy, the evening cold, and the night, besides its usual irradiation, was illuminated by ignited and curious meteors, which sometimes vibrated in the northern sky, and sometimes shot along the lower regions of the air, in every direc-

tion, with surprising velocity and uncommon magnificence.

C——n P——e seemed to make a kind of involuntary homage to these phænomena, by striking his sails. And it was but a just tribute, for a storm of rain soon followed, accompanied with vivid flashes of lightning, and roaring peals of thunder, dreadful to every auditor, except to the good man, and the British sailor, who, being strangers to guilt, are therefore strangers to fear. However, the calm that succeeded the storm, the mild and mellow effulgence that was issued in by the sun the following morning, made the face of the county of K—t, a kind of heaven upon earth. Nor could any-thing be more favorable to my landing at G———h, or to afford the g——m—t and the people an opportuuity of receiving me with all that pomp and ceremony

which they deemed due to my rank and to the occasion which brought me amongst them.

Indeed if any-thing could have reconciled me to my destiny, it would have been the manner of my reception at G———h; I was received at the landing place by the highest dignitaries of the c——h and s—e, of the army and navy; the bells rung, a r—l salute was fired, and the people cheered me with as much enthusiasm, as if they expected my union with the Marquis capable of multiplying the happiness of the land.

But all this was not sufficient; the million exulted; they saw the exterior of things, and knew not the state of the mind. They were ignorant of my heart, and little thought that their shouts and acclamations only served to

convince me that I was approaching the tribunal, before which I was finally to be condemned.

From the instant I set my foot on the B——h soil, my soul sunk within me, and were it not that my marriage with the Marquis was to secure the safety and liberation of Algernon, I could never have supported the felicitations which were offered to me from every quarter, and the ceremonies I had to endure on my arrival in town. Without offering to fatigue you with a recapitulation of those ceremonies, I shall, in my next confine myself to some essential circumstance, and in the mean time you will know me to be, &c.

CAROLINE.

LETTER XLIX.

Though long a probationer in the school of affliction, I had not profited by its admonitions, and, on the day that it was announced I should be introduced to the Marquis, I thought I should have sunk under the apprehensions of an alarmed and agitated mind.

Nor could I suppress the busy working of a vivid fancy. Algernon with his keen and piercing eye, his vigorous and active spirit, his elegant form, his pensive manner, and the tender anxiety of his love, was perpetually present to my imagination, while my ideas of the Marquis were in direct variance with my happiness and with his suit.

These reflections, however, were attended with considerable advantage to me. They led me into a minute enquiry into the nature of my situation, and pointed out the necessity of some plan applicable to its exigencies, and to the difficulties it presented on every side. I knew I was entering into engagements with a man of dispositions and qualities very different from mine. He was gay, and luxurious: I was serious, of simple manners, and fond of domestic and rural life. He was to roam abroad for amusements, while I was to avoid the din of such licentiousness, or else comply with his taste and inclinations so different from my own. But I was determined not to reproach him, but rather to make him feel the full weight of my prudence and virtue; and, by exercising towards him that frankness, kindness, resignation and patience which must always mee

with esteem and reverence, dispose him to abandon the Countess, and to regard me with merit and respect, complacency and affection.

That is, my Charlotte, during his round of disorder and extravagance, I resolved that he should never hear me mentioned but in terms of commendation; and that my conduct should be so exemplary both in public and in private that it might ultimately dispose him to imitate my example, and to abandon the error of his ways. I resolved, at least, to make trial of the full extent of a generous policy and patient virtue, and NEVER MORE to think of Algernon but as an interesting friend, a brother, for ever separated from me, and any love for whom it was criminal to entertain.

With determinations thus decidedly

and virtuously formed, a first interview with the Marquis, was the greatest difficulty I had immediately to endure.

I went attended by a large train of attendants, to the palace where this interview was to take place. Here my good fortune interposed, for he was in a distant part of his apartment, and I had an opportunity of contemplating him a few moments before I was introduced to him as his betrothed spouse. He also viewed me with some attention, and I could not discover that any disgust appeared in his eyes. But as he approached towards me I trembled with dread; a blush overspread my countenance, and when he took my hand to congratulate me on my arrival, and to felicitate himself on his good fortune, I subsided into tears, and had to take his proffered arm to avoid falling to the ground. He lamented

much to see me sink into such deep affliction, regarded me with the utmost tenderness, treated me with most lively concern, and conducted me to a seat where I soon became restored to myself and to reflection.

I am proud and happy, my Charlotte, to avow to you, that on the recovery of my reflection, I found it difficult to conceal the pleasure of my heart on perceiving the Marquis to be a man extremely different from what terror and prejudice had represented him to my imagination. His manners and person were truly amiable, and his conversation and expression so feeling and kind, that I am confident, had I known his person and sentiments, before my heart had entertained any other passion, I should have felt it my glory to have given him my hand.

He also pleased me considerably by being silent as to the sentiments of my heart, or of his own opinion of me; contenting himself with saying, that, under the peculiar circumstances of the intended marriage, he was extremely happy to find his hand and fortune were given to one on whom his affections could be with so little difficulty bestowed.

I retired from this ceremony with my mind rendered considerably easy, and the peevish and prejudiced notions I entertained of the Marquis, began to lose themselves in the complacency and pensiveness inspired by a conviction of his merits, and with which you shall become more particularly acquainted in the next letter from your dear, dear mother,

CAROLINE.

LETTER L.

Living under the immediate eyes of my uncle and aunt, who were also the father and mother of the Marquis, I had frequent and decided opportunities to discover, that the Marquis was a character so splendidly great, with endowments which threw such a brightness over his life, that even his promiscuous gallantries could not make him contemptible in my sight, and I consented to fix the wedding-day with less horror and puturbation than I could possibly have imagined.

The report of my concurrence was soon published throughout the land, and our mutual kindred, with the prin-

cipal nobility, were assembeld to grace the solemnity.

The people rejoiced, the palace resounded with minstrelsy; our hands were joined, the holy benediction was pronounced upon our heads, and the pealing anthem sounded forth the notes of praise. Alas! tuneful, but melancholy was the strain; for the ceremony was no sooner over than the sense of calamity began to devour my spirit; and I imagined the melodious voices I heard, sung the sorrows of those that are forsaken; the anguish of a desponding mind, and the wounds inflicted on a faithful heart by inconstancy and perjured vows.

What, thought I, can express the agony of Algernon's soul, when he learns that the faithless and inconstant Caroline has yielded to the passion of

another? He, Algernon, who was so true and loyal to me, to be so soon forgotten, so soon forsaken!—Oh! ill requited lover!—But why should I have pierced my soul with deeper wounds. I never was inconstant, but traitorous and tyrannic power were practised over me, and I married, at once to avoid oppression myself, and to rescue from oppression the man I adored.

Fortunately for me this train of reflection was attended with a faintness, and I was suffered to retire from the painful ceremony without having the disorders of my heart analized or exposed.

At night I was but ill recovered from this state; the memory of Algernon unfortunately pursued me to the chamber of the Marquis, and I looked with horror on a bed on which I was sensi-

ble I should experience neither felicity nor repose.

I was attended to this chamber by the Countess, and three more females of my suite, and when I entered it, I felt sensations that would have overcome me had it not been for the attentive kindness of my people, who endeavoured to amuse my mind by directing my attention to the magnificence of the surrounding scene.

The apartment, it is true, was extremely superb; the beds, the chairs, the window curtains, the hangings of the room, were all of white velvet, embroidered and fringed with gold, and every other article in the noble apartment corresponded with the same richness, and expressed in the Marquis the most exquisite taste for grandeur and design,

and for voluptuousness in fancy and imagination.

But it was all lost upon me!—I cast my eyes around with a vacant gaze, and sighed; while my swollen heart was ready to sink with terror as I prepared to retire.

The Marquis then appeared, and hastily undressing placed himself immediately beside me. I was no sooner in his arms than terror seized every faculty of my soul: and I shrunk with a terrific trembling from an embrace, which instead of warming, chilled my blood.

To the Marquis, who flattered himself that every female heart was his; who had discarded every injurious doubt, and who had made himself happy in the idea that I would have received his caresses with transport, this

conduct was a thunder-stroke which rendered him at once humilated and confounded.

Accustomed to the enraptured and frantic embraces of the Countess, a F————, a B————, a D———, a W————, &c. &c. how must he have been shocked at the cold and constrained concurrence of a heart that trembled at his touch or that throbbed at the remembrance of another !—How could he prize such a heart ? Could the anguish of a broken spirit accord with the fond caresses of such a bridegroom: of a man habituated to the enamoured and intoxicating embraces of every woman whom he had before chosen as the instrument of his delights and sensualities ?—What pleasure could he have in the arms of one who treated him in a manner so contrary ; in a way

so adverse to his pride, and so inimical to his feelings?

However he had the goodness to dissemble, and to advance his suit with a due regard to the anguish which distracted my heart, and to the tears which bedewed my face and bosom.—He remonstrated in the language of love and sentiment against the severity and singularity of my conduct towards him. He entreated me, with an humble and dejected voice, to recover from my affliction;—but, finding every lenient effort vain, he had at length recourse to a violence, which soon gave him dominion over my person, but in no degree over my mind; for the soul-racking thought of Algernon at the instant overpowered me, and I withdrew from his embrace,—weeping, and hiding my face in the folds of the cloaths.

The Marquis now appeared more irritated than astonished. He began by venting on me the most poignant reproaches, arose, walked about the chamber, and, as he returned to my frozen arms, something composed in his feelings, he humanely lamented with me, that, unfortunately for our comfort and domestic happiness, a cursed policy had proscribed his marrying with any but of his own rank.

A policy which he was convinced would embitter his own happiness, and poison all the future felicities of my life.

" It is now too late, Madam," said he, " but you have made me acquaint-
" ed with the awful truth.—I have torn
" you from your native country,—from
" your dear friends, perhaps from
" the heart of a deserving lover!—Ah,

" Madam, you weep, you sigh! Is it
" true, then, that I have torn you from
" the affections of a beloved admirer?
" —How could I consent to be an
" agent in so cruel a design?—No
" wonder such barbarous conduct ex-
" cites your tears! But will you not
" forgive me?—I do indeed wish to
" live in your favour and esteem!—I
" too am a miserable unfortunate, and
" my heart receives an additional pang
" from plunging you in such misery and
" despair!—Believe me, Madam, I
" commiserate you, and will consent
" to any thing that may soothe your
" sorrows and mitigate this distress.
" Do not be alarmed!—Why is your
" timorous heart thus chilled? What
" terror is it that shakes your senses?
" What apprehensions are they which
" overwhelm you in such affliction
" and despair?"

By this flattering and tender manner did your father, my Charlotte, (for I call the Marquis your father from the night I now record) endeavour to chase away some of the dread that disturbed my soul, but I could perceive that I had filled his own mind with many painful apprehensions, and that he felt a horror at the idea of caressing one whose heart and affections appeared to him firmly and irrevocably engaged, or else incapable of being conferred upon him.

Indeed so decidedly was he convinced of the impossibility of our experiencing happiness together, that, after passing the night in a state of mental misery, he agreed with me in the propriety of separate apartments, and of living together in the simple quality of two friends, determined not to annoy each other, and, by preserving

from the world our motives, save each others feelings and sentiments.

Before I proceed any further it will be essential to convince you, that this measure was absolutely necessary.

The Marquis, as I before observed, was accustomed to universal adulation and love. And he possessed those vain and ambitious sentiments which rendered it compleatly impossible for him to live in society with a woman whose utmost regard for him could never rise above the ordinary level of friendship or esteem.

He was also attached to women very superior to me in personal charms; and those women made it their study to flatter and gratify every predominant passion of his soul: whereas from the nature of my morals and affections, I

could only serve to make him frantic with disappointment, and perpetually sensible to all the horrors of a political match.

But if such were the motives which urged the Marquis to consent to a separation on the very first night of our wedding, how much were his resolves strengthened and augmented, when, won by the candour and dignity of his nature, I flung myself upon his breast, and there revealed the whole of my history, and all my intercourse with Algernon!

Your father pressed me to his breast. Assured me that my interesting narrative had inspired him with no sentiments but admiration, pity, and respect. Entreated me to consider him and consult him, as a friend. To keep those secret feelings of my heart from the

knowledge of others; and concluded by asserting, that he would never betray the confidence I had reposed in him, or wound my sentiments by possessing my person when he could not possess my heart.

Having thus come to a perfect understanding of our particular situation and sensations, we formed a plan for our future government; which, however, was attended with this inconvenience; that, as we were resolved to disguise from the world our motives, it subjected me to a torrent of calumny, aspersion and malevolence, which never appears likely to subside.

But away with such defamation and outrage! I shall never revert to such infamous slander again. Satisfied that you should know the cause, and that you should respect the motives which di-

rected your generous father, and unfortunate mother, in their early separation, I am content to be silent on this head.

Only further observing, that, as your father was also overwhelmed with odium and calumny for separating from me so soon, it is not a little astonishing that he did not immediately clear himself from the imputation, and recover the esteem of the public, by revealing the secret I had confided to his breast. But this he never did reveal but to one friend, and that particular disclosure was sanctioned with my permission.

I relate to you, my Charlotte, this extraordinary fact, in order that you may learn to estimate your father at his full worth, and that you may know that, notwishstanding the cries of prejudice and infamy, a man of more firmness of character and greatness of mind does not exist.

I have given you reason to think to the contrary in many of my preceding letters, but you are to understand that those letters were written under different influences and sources of intelligence, and that I now write, from the authority of experience, and with a heart improved and directed by an inviolate regard for truth.—Adieu! my dear Charlotte, adieu! I am weary, but not of loving you.

CAROLINE.

LETTER L.

THE bridal night had nearly expired in the manner described to you in my last, my Charlotte, when, with troubled spirits, and an agitated frame in want of repose, I tried to court the friendly aid of sleep; to chase away a number of apprehensive ideas from my mind, and to endeavour to rise with that composure and energy which were so essential for me to possess, in order to support the fatigues of those ceremonies and exigencies to which I was, from the nature of my situation, so painfully and peculiarly exposed. The Marquis also seemed disposed to sleep.

But vain were my efforts to overcome the agitation of my spirits. I slumber-

ed without repose, and slept without refreshment. I sighed at the vision of the unfortunate Algernon, and I fancied the sigh was repeated; I started up, and felt assured in my sleep, that the sigh could not be fancy. Again, I thought I heard a sound, as if uttered by some one in deep affliction: while I was attentively listening in breathless agony, to ascertain whether it was repeated, I felt convinced that I saw the figure of Algernon glide backward and forward, and at length beckon me to follow. Though alarmed at a sight that chilled my heart, yet did I not awake, and I thought I covered myself with my wedding garments, and pursued the phantom over lands and seas, to the very chamber of the tower in which I last saw him sunk in agony and loaded with chains! I fancied, too, that something rested heavy upon his mind, which he wished to unfold to

me. His frequent glances at me bespoke this, but methought that my wedding robe bound his tongue in silence. Sensible that he could not speak, he kept his eyes continually upon me, and the tears fell fast down his cheeks.

'Hapless Algernon!' exclaimed I, 'why is your sorrow so extreme? Am I not come to restore you to freedom and to life; to lull yor distress; to extinguish your grief, and to speak comfort to your faint and afflicted heart?'

His countenance for the first time appeared to wear the symptoms of displeasure; appeared to reproach me for inconstancy; and his dress was a crimson garment, the symbol of revenge for violated oaths and broken vows! Looking on me with a frantic mien, he again beckoned me to follow him to the lofty

battlements of the tower, where he was confined. The prospect was vast and awfully magnificent. He invited me to look over the highest pinnacle of the building, and finding my attention fixed, he precipitated himself down the dreadful perpendicular precipice, and was dead long before he reached the ground! A dizziness, methought, seized upon me; I called aloud upon his name; flung myself down the same tremendous height—and awoke!

Alas! my daughter, in what state did I awake? Overpowered with the apprehensions of the vision, while under its deepest influence, while your father, roused by the tumult and disorder occasioned by my dream, came to my assistance, I was yet under the government of the illusion, and repeatedly called upon the name of Algernon, and upon that of God to preserve his

life. The Marquis raised me from the floor with the utmost tenderness, replaced me by his side, and assured me, with nobleness of mind that does him eternal honor, that he would send an express to G——y, and procure the instant liberation of Algernon, by assuring the Duke, under his own hand, that I had performed all the obligations which were imposed upon me by his commands.

So much kindness and condescension, on the part of your amiable father, could not fail but inspire me with the highest considerations of esteem and respect; but it also convinced me of the necessity of separation, as it was evident that he, with such elevation of sentiment, and I, with such unalterable attachment for another, could not, with any regard to a dignified consistency, look to the same pillow for plea-

sure or for repose. We therefore reiterated our intention of living under the same roof, only in the exercise of those offices of friendship and sentiment which endear the marriage state without the transports of love, and which render life rather a scene of calm content, than of turbulent pleasures and rapturous enjoyments.

Thus determined, I descended after the Marquis to breakfast, I was accosted by him with a gracious smile, and presented with the dispatch, which he had prepared for G——y. I added a few hasty lines to my mother, and before I sat down to breakfast, I had the supreme satisfaction of seeing the messenger depart, who was to procure the liberation of the unfortunate Algernon. This circumstance recovered me from the state of dejection to which I had fallen, and enabled me to endure the

the tedious ceremonies of such an occasion with a fortitude and chearfulness that shed around me the deceitful appearance of content and gratification of mind.

Numerous were those ceremonies which I had to pass through! Numerous were the introductions! Numerous were the felicitations of the occasion! But, as they can neither interest the heart nor improve the understanding, I shall pass them all over, and confine myself to such events and circumstances as are connected with your future welfare and the actual history of my life. Under this description, I shall have to class all the branches of your father's family; many of the statesmen who have flourished in my time; many of the public characters of celebrity and fame, and many of the domestic and political vicissitudes that have occurred

since my intimacy with the several personages, connected with the B——h throne.

And, as the manners and principles of the E——h people have had an influence on my fortunes, and as they are intimately allied with your future interests, so will those manners and principles require a minute investigation; an investigation which can alone throw a just light over these memoirs, and contribute to raise or to sink me in your opinion and esteem.

To delineate these events, characters, manners and principles without aggravation or weakness, to unravel their effects upon my happiness and reputation, and upon the public state and welfare, and to trace them to their real though distant sources, is, indeed, a task of equal difficulty and importance. It may be necessary, therefore, to apo-

logize even for the attempt: as being supposed to lie beyond the sphere of the ONE who makes it. To this it can only be replied, that the ONE who makes it, however devoid of the talent of an author, is the only ONE in existence, who could convey to you the information contained in these important though unpolished letters.

Should they fall into other hands than yours, my Charlotte, he, or she, will be much mistaken, who expects to find in them a vein of undistinguishing and licentious satire. To rail at my enemies, and at the times at large, can serve no good purpose, and would naturally appear to arise from a want of knowledge, or a want of integrity. There never was a court, an age or a nation, that had not virtues and vices peculiar to itself: and in some respects, perhaps, there is no time nor country delivered

down to us in story, in which a wise man would so much wish to have lived, as in E——d and at the present day. Notwithstanding this, I fear, I shall have to prove to you, that the situation of your family and of your country are most dangerous. The constitution is on the brink of a precipice, and the land is involved in ruin and despair!

At such a juncture, to hold up a true mirrour to YOU, and to let YOUR country see themselves as the authors of their own misfortunes, cannot be a very popular design. But as I am not solicitous about private consequences, I can, with the greater security, follow the impulse of my own judgment, and communicate to you those facts, and that information, which my intercourse with the c—t allows me to possess. To the utmost of my skill and power,

therefore, will I speak the truth on all occasions: this will render my letters useful to you; serviceable to my king and country, and important to me; in as much as they will procure for me the esteem of persons of virtue and wisdom, whose favor and approbation alone I seek. To such, these papers will hereafter be committed, nor do I fear, should I be denied the protection and friendship of the present times, but that posterity will do me justice, and pronounce me deserving of their commiseration and applause. With this consolation, I conclude, &c.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LI.

HAVING suffered all the formalities of c—t, I accompanied the Marquis to W——r, where I had an opportunity of contemplating the whole of his family under one point of view, and of forming my opinions as to their respective characters.

They were assembled on a day, set apart as a day of public thanksgiving, for some extraordinary naval successes, which had secured to the country every-thing that could be esteemed, and which delivered her from every-thing that could be apprehended by a free people. I cannot but observe to you, my Charlotte, the natural tendency in such a national devotion, to in-

spire men with sentiments of religious gratitude, and to swell their hearts with inward transports of joy and exultation.

When instances of divine favor, are great in themselves, when they are fresh in the memory, when they are peculiar to a certain country, and commemorated by them in large and solemn assemblies; a person must be of a very cold or degenerate temper, whose heart does not burn within him in the midst of that praise and adoration, which arises at the same hour in all the different parts of the nation, and from the many thousands of the people.

Among all the public solemnities of this nature, there is none in history so glorious as that of king Solomon, at the dedication of the temple. Besides the great officers of state, and the inhabit-

ants of Jerusalem, all the elders and heads of Scribes, with the whole body of the people ranged under them, from one end of the kingdom to the other, were summoned to assist in it. We may guess at the prodigious number of this assembly from the sacrifice on which they feasted, consisting of a hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and two hundred and twenty hecatombs of oxen. When this vast congregation was formed into a regular procession to attend the ark of the covenant, the king marched at the head of his people, with hymns and dances to the new temple, which he had erected for its reception. Josephus tells us, that the Levites sprinkled the way as they passed with the blood of sacrifices, and burned the holy incense in such quantities as refreshed the whole multitude with its odours, and filled all the region about them with perfume. When the

ark was deposited under the wings of the cherubims in the holy place, the great consort of praise began. It was enlivened with a hundred and twenty trumpets, assisted with a proportionable number of other kinds of musical instruments, and accompanied with innumerable voices of all the singers of Israel, who were instructed and set apart to religious performances of this kind. As this mighty Chorus was extolling their Maker, and exciting the whole nation thus assembled to the praise of his never ceasing goodness and mercy, the *Shekinah* descended: or to tell it you in the more emphatical words of holy writ,——

" It came to pass, as the trumpets " and singers were as one, to make one " sound to be heard in praising and " thanking the Lord, and when they " lift up their voice with the trumpets

" and cymbals, and instruments of mu-
" sic, and praised the Lord, saying, *For*
" *he is good, for his mercy endureth for*
" *ever;* that then the house was filled
" with a cloud."

The priests themselves, not able to bear the awfulness of the appearance, retired in the court of the temple, where the king being placed upon a golden scaffold, so as to be seen by the whole multitude, blessed the congregation of Israel, and afterwards spreading forth his hands to heaven, offered up that divine prayer, which is twice recorded at length in scripture, and has always been looked upon as a composition fit to have proceeded from the wisest of men.

He had no sooner finished his prayer, when a flash of fire fell from heaven, and burned up the sacrifice, which

already upon the altar. The people, whose hearts were gradually moved by the solemnity of the whole proceeding, having been exalted by the religious strains of music, and awed by the appearance of that glory, which filled the temple, seeing now the miraculous consumption of the sacrifice, and observing the piety of their king, who lay prostrate before his Maker, " bowed themselves with their " faces to the ground upon the pave- " ment, and worshipped and praised " the Lord, saying, FOR HE IS GOOD, " FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR " EVER."

What happiness might not such a kingdom promise itself, where the same elevated spirit of religion ran through the prince, the priests, and the people? But I shall quit this head, to observe to you that such an uncommon

fervour of devotion shewed itself among the E——h formerly, and particularly in the persons of three princes who were the greatest conquerors in the records of the B——h history. These are Edward the Third, his son, the Black Prince, and Henry the Fifth. As for the first, we are told, that before the famous battle of Cressy, he spent the greatest part of the night in prayer, and in the morning received the sacrament with his son, the chief of his officers and nobility. The night of that glorious day, was no less piously distinguished by the orders which he gave out to his army, that they should forbear all insulting of their enemies, or boasting of their own valour, and employ their time in returning thanks to the great Giver of the victory.

The Black Prince, before the battle of Poictiers, declared, that his whole confidence was in the divine assistance; and, after that great victory, he behaved himself in all particulars like a truly Christian conqueror. Eight days successively were appointed by his father in E———d, for a solemn and public thanksgiving; and when the young Prince returned in triumph with a king of France as his prisoner, the pomp of the day consisted chiefly in extraordinary processions, and acts of devotion. The behaviour of the Black Prince, after a battle in Spain, whereby he restored the king of Castile to his dominions, was no less remarkable. When that king, transported with his success, flung himself upon his knees to thank him, the generous Prince ran to him, and, taking him by the hand, told him it was not HE who could lay any claim to his gratitude, but desired they might

go to the altar together, and jointly return their thanks to HIM only to whom thanks was due.

Henry the Fifth, who, at the beginning of his reign made a public prayer in the presence of his Lords and Commons, that he might be cut off by an immediate death, if Providence foresaw he would not prove a just and good governor, and promote the welfare of his people; manifestly derived his courage from his piety, and was scrupulously careful not to ascribe the success of his courage to himself. When he came within sight of that prodigious army, which offered him battle at Agincourt, he ordered all his cavalry to dismount, and with the rest of his forces, to implore upon their knees a blessing on their undertaking. In a noble speech, which he made to his soldiers immediately before the first onset, he took no-

tice of a very remarkable circumstance, namely, that this very day of battle, was the day appointed in his own kingdom to offer up public devotions for the prosperity of his arms; and therefore bid them not doubt of victory, since at the same time that they were fighting in the field, all the people of E———d were lifting up their hands to heaven for their success. Upon the close of that memorable day, in which the king had performed wonders with his own hand, he ordered the cxvth. psalm to be repeated in the midst of his victorious army, and at the words, "NOT UNTO US, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME BE THE PRAISE!" He himself, with his whole host, fell to the earth upon their faces, ascribing to Omnipotence the whole glory of the action.

I shall conclude this letter with a reflection which naturally rises out of it. As there is nothing more beautiful in the sight of God, than a King and his people concurring in such extraordinary acts of devotion, so was there nothing so sublime in my eyes as the K—g of E——d surrounded by his people and offering up praises to his Maker.—What harmony and correspondence did it not denote between the sovereign and his subjects!—How delightful was it, on my earliest visit to W———r, to see the K—g and his people join together, in the most joyful, in the most solemn and most laudable action of reasonable creatures!—But I cannot give you an idea of the pleasurable impression made on me by this sublime spectacle! Were I, in fact, to have wished for a sovereign, who, in the then situation of affairs, would have been capable of advancing my admiration and the national

happiness, what could I have desired more than a P—— mature in wisdom and experience; zealous for religion and morality, and anxious to set an example, not only of every public but of every private virtue. I assure you, my Charlotte, that the opinions I entertained of this good and illustrious S———n at the interview I alluded to have been strengthened and confirmed by my intimacy since.

This great and excellent Personage has worn himself nearly out in his application to such labors as make him useful to his country. And all this done with a view to the public good, and not to the fame which should arise out of such generous endeavours. Let the reputation of the action fall where it would, so his country reaps the benefit from it, he is satisfied. As this turn of mind throws off

in a great measure the oppositions of turbulence and faction, it enables him to gain the most vain and impracticable into his designs, and to bring about several great events for the safety and advantage of the public, which must have died in their birth, did he appear less desirous of being beneficial to mankind than to his individual self. His political life seems indeed to be prolonged beyond its natural term, that he may have the satisfaction of seeing an issue to the war, and an ample security for the public happiness.

The Duke's religion is sincere, not ostentatious; and such as inspires him with an universal benevolence towards every B——h subject, not with bitterness against any one of them. He shews his firm adherence to it as modelled by the national constitution, and

is constant to his offices of devotion, both in public and in his family.

His humanity also appears in the minutest circumstances of his conversation. You find it in the benevolence of his aspect, the complacency of his behaviour, and the tone of his voice. His great application to the arduous duties of his station has not impeted his temper with any thing morose or litigious. He does not know what it is to wrangle with his servants, or to triumph in the superiority of his dominion.

As in his political capacity he contributes to the establishment of religion and the good of his native country, so is he always true to every great moral end.—His character is uniform and consistent with itself, and his whole con-

duct is of a piece.—His principles are founded on reason, and supported in virtue ; and therefore do not lie at the mercy of ambition, avarice, or resentment.—His notions are no less steady and unshaken, than just and upright. In a word, he is concluding his course among the same attachments and principles with which he began it.

This great man is not more conspicuous as a patriot and a statesman, than as a christian and a governor. As by dividing his time between the public scenes of business, and the private retirements of life, he takes care to keep up both the great and the good man. In consequence, he enjoys in the highest perfection true talents, which do not often meet in the same person ; the greatest strength of political knowledge, and the most exquisite love of rural œconomy.

There is no doubt, then, but this wonderful man will make the most distinguished figure in the history of the present age: but we cannot expect that his merit will shine out in its proper light, since he does many things that are not published in his name; is at the bottom of many excellent councils, in which he does not appear; does offices of friendship to many persons, who know not from whom they are derived; and confers great services on his country, the glory of which is transferred to others.—In short, since he makes it his endeavour rather to do worthy actions than to gain an illustrious character.

There is but one error in this great personage, and that error, similar to his virtues, has been uniform and prevalent. What I mean is, the D—e of E——— has always had the appointment of his

M———y's ministers, and he has never, by any accident, been fortunate in his nominations.—The reason may be, that there is nothing in society so difficult to discover as a good minister. Let us for a moment enquire into the qualifications of such an officer, and we will discover the difficulties to which the D—e was exposed.

The man who aspires to the character of a good minister, must be well educated in the knowledge and constitution, its laws, settlements, dependencies, and interests: always faithful to the crown, when consistent with his duty to his country;—fonder of the substance than the outside of religion;—easy in his fortunes;—a lover of mankind in general;—more careful to preserve, than to aggrandize a family;—making virtue the founda-

tion of his friendship; and merit the title to his favor;—a preserver of the freedom of others, as well as of his own;—delighting rather to be thought good, than great;—pleased with an opportunity of making his fellow-creatures happy;—just in his dealings;—moderate in his pleasures; true to the several trusts reposed in him;—watchful over the accounts of others, and ready to submit his own to a full and impartial inspection;—not servile when out of power, nor imperious when in authority;—studying more the propriety of eloquence, than the ornaments of oratory, and speaking rather to the judgment of others, than to their passions and interests;—not solicitous for a place because he wants it, but because the place wants him;—so keen in his resentments for the public, that he has no

room for those that are personal;—well acquainted with the most noted characters and transactions of late years;—indifferent in his choice of public or private life, but careful to adorn both;—looking on the revenue of an office to be so far public-money as it is intended for the support and dignity of that office to which it is appropriated.

Most assuredly, Mr. P—t, and Mr. F-x, L—d G—y and L—d G———e, L—d S———h, and Mr. P——l are not of this description.—When Mr. P—t invites me to his crusade, with that eloquence which has no rival, and that zeal which even outstrips itself, I assent only while I listen to him; I know not how it happens, but when the charm of his voice ceases, my concurrence stops with it. He

leaves no impresson, I think, and certainly no conviction; for he neither proves to me the probability of succeeding, nor, shall I own it to you, the interest of success!—And, when Mr. F-x belies, or slanders the country, I listen with impatience, I scarce can listen; and when he represents E——d as aggressors in the war, or as bankrupts in public faith, or as defeated and incapable of reducing the enemy to just and adequate conditions of peace, my heart and my understanding repels the libel; and when he counsels to abandon to France, all that she may desire to occupy, I cannot perceive, in the circumstances of either country, that necessity which could alone render his advice any thing but madness, folly, or absence of information.

From both of these, therefore, I turn, equally dissatisfied and uncon-

vinced, and cast my eyes on the other m———rs with still greater disgust and aversion. If one of the former affected to be a friend of peace, these are the avowed friends of war and devastation!

Is it not astonishing how the Duke could be so unfortunate in his selection of members of a————n?—And I would ask of those m———s, whose fastidious ears cannot bear the very whispers of peace, who force their country to persevere so nobly in an internecine war with France, till they shall replace the monarch on his throne, and the host on his altars, —I would ask, what hope they entertain of rousing, by their eloquence a sluggish people, deaf to all the cries of honor, interest and duty? For I lament to inform you that a very short

residence in E———d gave me this opinion of her inhabitants.

Let those m———rs, then, throw their eyes at home, and tell me what high thoughts, what generous desires, what honorable spirit they discover? let them show me the funds they rely upon, of public virtue, of disinterestedness, of self-devotedness, amongst themselves, or their people, or their wealthy merchants, or their wealthy nobility if they please, or, if they please, their wealthy clergy?

Why was the Bank besieged when a handful of felons landed in P———shire?—Why was the specie of the realm pumped out of circulation, to be hidden in cellars, or buried in the earth, when there was but a threat of invasion?—Why did the stocks fall

when G———d, the jew, blew out his brains?—What superfluous valour do they find amongst themselves?—What virtues of supererogation, that they should spend them in a foreign cause?—Are they sure, that they possess more energy, and zeal, and patriotism than are necessary to the defence of their own throne, of their own churches, of their own soil?

Let m———rs not decieve themselves!—I know E———d well, and I fear the very name of country has disappeared from the midst of it;—that name, so dear, so tender and so powerful, sleeps in the ear of B——s. Hypocrisy blushes to pronounce it, credulity listens to it no more; it seems fraud, and sounds declamation,

The truth is, commerce has done its perfect work; it has withdrawn the eyes of the E——h from every general public care, from every generous manly thought; to their ledgers and their day-books;—they are become a nation of tills and counters, not of states and provinces!—a cold, callous, calculating race, whose plodding head looks down and mocks their heart, who reason themselves out of honor, out of patriotism, out of every great propensity of the soul.—If their funds fall a sixteenth, this war of religion, principle, necessity, is said to be a m——l trick, or a crusade of kings. For half a crown in an hundred pounds they abandon their laws, their altars, their independence, and their fields! Upon all this globe of earth, they discern no speck but the Stock-Exchange! They tremble for no generous nation: no unhappy confederate: they throw their eyes,

not to the temple where they worship, or the place where they were born, but to the Stock-Exchange!—Has Prussia lost her power?—thank Heaven, stocks rise.—Is Austria in a state of vassallage?—thank Heaven, still stocks rise!—What is it to the E——h if rape and murder prowl through the provinces of Italy, and the circles of Germany? What, if desolating fires, and military massacres destroy the villages and the peasantry of Spain and Portugal? What, if universal conquest subject all mankind to the French vandal, and set his obscene dominion on the neck of all the human race—What of all this? the stocks rise! —But, as I have just observed, if a naked band of miserable wretches are disembarked by force in the Welsh mountains, or if a traitor raises a popular commotion, or if a Jew cuts his throat, so as to bring the shade of danger to

themselves,—Oh! it is another thing; draw a line round the bank, overwhelm the public credit, and steal the palladium of the country!!!——This has fatigued me. Farewell!

CAROLINE.

LETTER LIV.

In my last letter I endeavoured to give you a general idea of the character of the D—e of E———h—and of the nation—in this, I shall confine myself to the portraiture of the Duchess.

It is, notwithstanding, at all times, a difficult, delicate, and sometimes a dangerous task, to attempt the delineation of the life and character of such a personage as the Duchess. The passions of the public are too much agitated to attend to cool discussion while they contemplate the immediate political situation of their country, more especially in a period like the present, so

replete with important occurrences and singular events.

The subject of this letter is, in many points of view, the most conspicuous woman which modern Europe has ever beheld, whether she be considered in respect to her very extraordinary prudence, her wonderful success in life, or the singular events which have occurred since her marriage with the D—e of E———h. Her history will include the annals of the most remarkable epoch of the world; and she will be justly deemed by future ages, the lever which gave motion to the proceedings of all the cabinets of Europe. A large share of the good or evil which may result, will be solely ascribed to her councils, and in proportion to the opinion that may prevail, posterity will proclaim her a blessing or a curse to the world.

This country never had a public character of whom such different opinions have been entertained, and indeed no former woman was ever placed in such critical circumstances. The history of this illustrious female, compressing, as it necessarily must, a review of her political life, and HER SUPPORT of the B—e, the C———m, the P—t, and P———l, &c &c. ad———st—ns, will be resorted to at some future period, as one of the most interesting and instructive performances that can occupy the attention of the B——h people, or even the notice of mankind.

When this extraordinary woman was yet in her father's court, she was less celebrated for the beauties of her person, than for the accomplishments of her mind, and yet there was no prince in the empire, who had room for such an alliance, that was not an-

bitious of gaining her into his family, either as a daughter or as a consort. Even he, who was lately the chief of the crowned heads in Europe, and was to be King of Spain, and heir to all the dominions of the house of Austria, sought her in marriage.—Could her mind have been captivated with the glories of this world, she had them all laid before her; but she generously declined them, because she saw the acceptance of them was inconsistent with what she esteems more than all the glories of this world, the interest and the enjoyment of her religion.—Providence, however, kept in store a reward for such exalted virtue; and, by the secret methods of its wisdom, opened a way for her to become the greatest of her sex, among those, who profess that faith to which she adhered with so much christian magnanimity.

This her illustrious conduct might, in the eye of the world, have lost its merit, had not so amiable a character as the D—e of F——h declared his desire for the same alliance at that time: it would then have been no wonder that all other proposals had been rejected. But it was the fame of this heroic constancy that determined the Duke to abandon a lovely quaker girl for whom he long entertained a passion, and to desire in marriage a princess whose personal charms and mental endowments were indeed inferior to those of the lovely quaker, but whose prudence, religion, and virtue were superior to every other character of the times. The B——h nation had reason to rejoice that such a proposal was made and accepted, and that her S——e H——ss, with regard to these two successive treaties of marriage, shewed as much prudence in her com-

pliance with the one, as religion, piety, and morality, in her refusal of the other.

The Princess was no sooner married and arrived, than she improved the morals of that c—t, which was before reckoned among the most moral in Europe; and increased the satisfaction of that people, who were before looked upon as the happiest in the circle of civilized empires. Every day discovered those admirable qualities for which she was so justly famed; she instantly became the idol of the pious Duke, and the people rejoiced to see the virtues of private life flourish in the former regions of impiety, corruption and profligacy.

From this happy union sprung up a numerous and beautiful progeny. And the people are more pleased to behold

this illustrious progeny, because they value the virtues of those from whom they descend. Not only the features, but the mind of the parent is often conspicuous in the offspring. But the Duchess took the surest method of making her issue like herself, by instilling early into their minds all the principles of religion, virtue, and honor, and seasoning their tender years with all that knowledge which they were capable of receiving. She directed them by precepts in the first instance, and, as they advanced in life, she endeavoured to form them by her example.

But if we regard the Duchess exclusively in that light which diffuses the greatest glory round a human character, we shall find the christian no less conspicuous than the wife and mother. She is as eminent for a sincere piety in the practice of religion, as for

an inviolable adherence to its principles She is constant in her attendance on the daily offices of the church, and by her serious and devout comportment on these solemn occasions, gives an example that is, unfortunately, very often too much wanted in courts.

Her religion is equally free from the weakness of superstition, and the sourness of enthusiasm. It is not of that uncomfortable melancholy nature which disappoints its own end, by appearing unamiable to those whom it would gain to its interests. It discovers itself in the genuine effects of christianity, in affability, compassion, benevolence, evenness of mind, and all the offices of an active and universal charity.

However, notwithstanding these amiable qualities, the Duchess appears

fitted and appointed, by the Author of nature, more to shine in private than in public life. For her religion, disposes her to intolerance of worship; her morals, to contraction of sentiment, and her economy to an alliance with avarice. Hence she has been an enemy to catholic emancipation, to reform in parliament, and to that taste for grandeur and generosity which should be displayed by every member of so illustrious an House.

I shall avoid any religious or political controversy in this correspondence, therefore I look over the intolerance and contraction of the disposition of the Duchess.

Our taste of beauty in the order and regularity of natural objects is the foundation of all that pleasure we receive from the more elegant devices of

art; such as architecture, music, gardening, painting, statuary; to which we may likewise add the pleasures of dress, equipages, attendants, furniture. —Without some or other of which pursuits, life would want many of those conveniences, and most of those amusements, for which alone it is chiefly valuable, in the opinion of such as would be esteemed to have the truest notions of existence.—Strike off the artificial improvements of life, as the Duchess does when she lives in the manner of the wife of a mechanic, and you leave little or no advantage to a great fortune above a very small one.

Nay more, the beauties of nature lie open to all in common: the substantial part of all sensible gratifications is attainable by a very moderate share of wealth and power: nay, even scarcity often recommends these things

to us much more than abundance. Would we refine upon the common satisfactions of life, and strike out into a more varied scene of enjoyments than lie within the reach of the vulgar, we must call in those improvements of fancy, which the Duchess excludes, as what alone can compass this point for us. Accordingly, if we look abroad into the world, and reflect a little what it is that so attracts our eyes and our envy in the higher stations of life, shall we not find it to be only the superior capacity they give to people of more distinguished rank for enjoying the several pleasures of comfort, decency, regularity, &c.?—Why else is the pride and magnificence of a palace preferred to the humility of a plain and cleanly cottage? a piece of painting to an ordinary sign-post?—A suit of embroidery to a covering of frize?—A service of plate to a set of earthen dishes?

—A numerous attendance of servants to a dumb-waiter?—A concert of music to a company of rustic scrapers?—An opera to a village wake?

If you say that considerations of property determine our choice here, I answer, my child, property alone cannot do it: for then a miser would be thought equally happy with a person of the most accomplished taste. It must be property applied to something we esteem happiness. Even the miser, himself, though at present by a strange infatuation in the passion of avarice his thoughts look no further than possession, commenced his avarice probably from a prospect of happiness. It was the apprehension of want, that is, of not having the means of enjoying life in his power, that engaged him in this saving regimen: unless we may suppose that even yet he has an eye to

the making a family, as it is called; that is, laying a foundation for others to taste those very pleasures, from which the wretch himself is excluded from a cherished horror of expence. But, be this as it may, I am clearly of opinion the consequences both of the miser, and of the person regardless of the refinements of taste, are nearly the same;—both these sorts of characters may be said to leave their wealth to others, and give up their own right in their own possessions, that somebody else may be the better for them.

How different are the causes that may thus bring about the same effects? —No one is apt to suspect a miser of liberality, or a moralist of covetousness; and yet they both act the very same part in life, though upon quite contrary principles; they both deny themselves in the very same instances. To suffer

want through the fear of want, which is the case with the former, is, it may be, the more flagrant absurdity; but to embrace it voluntarily, and for its own sake, as does the latter, is surely no inconsiderable one; especially in a constitution of things by no means favourable to such an austere sentiment of religious perfection.—I shall endeavour to prove this more amply in my next. Adieu! dear maid, adieu!

CAROLINE.

LETTER LV.

But to go a little farther, my lovely Charlotte, into that absence of taste which characterizes the Duchess of E———h. Admitting that the only lawful use in riches is, as our apostle speaks, to "do good, to be rich in good works," I can suppose it can be no diminution of any act of beneficence, that it is contrived so as to be at once a benefit to the author, no less than to the object of it. I think, I can make this clear to you: do, attend to me!

If, at the same time, that I am supplying the wants of others, I can so order the matter as to answer many good purposes to myself; is the charity

of such a procedure at all lessened by its thus turning to a double account? Surely there can be no pretence to think so. Now it is in this view, that I would look upon persons of rank and fortune in life, as instruments in the hands of a kind and good Providence to administer to the necessities and occasions of those who move in a lower sphere, from the united principles of generosity and self-interest. Their personal recreations and amusements; the expences of their station and circumstances in the world, their very luxuries, and most elegant superfluities, both are, and ought to be employed as public benefits. They are the proper encouragers of honest industry; a kind of tax upon the liberality of those who are exempted by their superior situation in society from the drudgeries of its more servile offices. They find work and maintenance for the labour-

ing poor, so necessary in all communities; they are the support of many useful trades and employments in the middle stations of life; they are the foundation of a more extended commerce, both at home, and with foreign nations, and they are the cause of that general circulation of property, by which in the wise appointment of things, the abundance of a few is made subservient to the exigencies of the many. Where this view takes place, such a generous œconomy of our pleasures, sanctifies, as it were, the very nature of them: it adds a merit to expence, converts ornament into use, and elegance into charity! For my part, Charlotte, I know not a more enviable character than that of a truly great woman, who, by a generosity of thinking, answerable to her superior capacity of doing good, employs her fortune to all the purposes of a magnificent liberality; like a good

angel, a kind of guardian divinity to her fellow-creatures, diffusing happiness far and wide, through a numerous circle of grateful dependents; whilst, at the same time, by a wonderful provision in nature to reward so serviceable a benevolence: the very objects of her beauty, are the instruments of her most valuable gratifications, and mental pleasures.

There is no one thing so injurious to the character of the Duchess, than her ignorance of these arguments, and also of her generally mistaken notions of charity: with many others, she seems to consider alms as what alone deserves that name. As if it were not a greater, a more god-like benevolence, to put the same persons above the hard necessity of asking our alms, than it is to relieve them upon their actual application for them. To be touched with the imme-

diate symptoms of wretchedness, is no very high degree of excellency: she is a scandal to her sex who is not so. But to concert calmly and sedately the most effectual methods of doing good, as it were, before it is even sought for; to cherish the fair idea in our minds, and by friendly precautions of benevolence to hinder, as far as may be, the very entrance of misery into the world; this is, indeed, a truly heroic instance of virtue and liberality of mind.

And this, my beloved daughter, is the very part which every woman of distinction and affluence is called upon to act, if she do but rationally consult her own greatest entertainment and happiness. Yes, such is the morality even of pleasure in a true estimate of things: so wonderfully are virtue and self-gratification complicated together! I might add here, that the very pursuit

of that pleasure itself, and against which the Duchess is so inimical, is not only convertible in the method I have already named, into an actual exercise of virtue, but in reality has a natural tendency to carry us on to still higher degrees of it: it being scarce possible, but that, to an amiable woman, the same principle of good taste, which regulates her amusements, must irresistibly make its way into the œconomy of her mind and temper; and lay the happy foundation of solid worth in her inward and moral character.

This absence of taste in the Duchess, however, does not flow from a corrupt principle, but from the want of a principle of reverence to herself. And yet this proud principle was thought fit to be inculcated by one of the best and wisest moralists of antiquity. Pride, my Charlotte, is one of those qualities

in our nature, that is either good or bad, according as it is applied. To be proud of, or approve in ourselves, what is really excellent, is only to form a true estimate of things: and can there be any merit in being mistaken? Pride, then, is only wrong, when it is established upon wrong objects; when we applaud ourselves for imaginary worth, and neglect that worth which is real and genuine. If the Duchess says, that every degree of pride is criminal in the present imperfect state of human nature, what is this but to say, that it is impossible for women to arrive at any degree of moral worth? An opinion, which, as fallen as woman is represented to be, cannot be maintained without a manifest dishonor to her Maker.

But to state this matter yet more clearly.—If compulsion be the essence of virtue, the conduct of the Supreme

Being himself, has much less merit in it, than that of the most disingenuous of his creatures; otherwise, what is a perfection in the Deity, cannot but be such in woman also, as far as she is able to imitate it. Now to practice virtue, the highest degrees of virtue, without constraint; to pursue it upon a principle of free choice, for the mere pleasure and approbation of the thing itself, as his glory and his happiness, is what constitutes our idea of the Divine Perfection: and shall the same thing which gives such a superlative grace and lustre to the Divine Character, cast a shade upon the human? So that, after all, the constraint and self-denial of the Duchess, is so far from being necessary to her virtue, that it is mere weakness or excess of virtue, that gives them either use or expediency. They are, at least, a derogation from the true merit of her virtue, as far as

they are shewn to take place in it: and I am confident, that were she to avow her real sentiment, she would confess the highest state of moral excellence to be that, where there is nothing of dissatisfaction, nothing of difficulty; where virtue is, as it ever ought to be, a service of perfect freedom, generous affection, and unallayed complacency. But this, perhaps, may be thought refining. Enough has been argued to establish this conclusion, that, however, the pursuits of pleasure and virtue are represented by the Duchess as inconsistent, the natural constitution of things, a most certain testimony of the intention of their author, is such, as never can be reconciled with so gloomy a principle. Providence, which does nothing in vain, would not have so exquisitely adapted the works of his hands to the entertainment and service of woman, as well as man, if misery of any kind

had been her or his determined portion and assignment in the present life.

The discipline of virtue, then, is an easy and liberal discipline. The Duchess is a stranger to her lovely form, when she represents her with a forbidding aspect, with nothing but clouds and frowns upon her brow. The practice of our duty is, in the strictest sense, to follow nature, and the way to recommend ourselves to a kind and good Deity is, not to harass and afflict that being he has in his gracious bounty bestowed upon us; but, upon a rational and judicious estimate of things, to consult in the most effectual manner at once the greatest ease, happiness, and improvement of its condition.

To the still deeper calamity of this country, the politics of the Duchess are more erroneous than her principles

of taste and virtue. And as these polities have been directed by the contraction in which she was bred in a G——n court, they have manifested themselves here in a continued system of œconomy.

This sentiment of parsimonious œconomy being known, every SERVANT employed by the Duke, through her recommendation, and maintained through her approbation, has to advance the interests of her house, and at the same time promote the wealth of the nation, by multiplying its commerce, and encouraging every species of traffic and speculation. But in this, those servants have both deceived themselves and their mistress. For, by forcing the trade and revenues of the state beyond the conduct of the hard money in circulation, they were forced to have recourse to other measures, and to sub-

stitute *paper* for *money* throughout all the departments of the kingdom.

It would appear from hence, that in proportion as the minds of men become debauched and enervated, they are open to delusion of every kind. Human nature perhaps could never form a greater contrast than between the old Roman republic and the modern dealers in beads and catgut, who disgrace the same ground.

When a nation could be so far guiled by a priesthood, as to believe a wafer to be not only the true sign of the human body, but the body itself actually existing in many different places at the same time; they became bankrupt in understanding: their juggling leaders had drawn upon them for the last mite of reason and common sense; and transubstantiation remained in all the

catholic states, a badge of spiritual tyranny on one hand, and slavery on the other; which infinitely surpassed all the fable, superstition, and imposture of pagan Rome.

Luckily, the F——h have shaken off this creed, and indeed most other religious creeds and prejudices. It is enough for them to swallow the political transubstantiation of civil property imposed on them by the m——s of the Duchess's approbation: and yet their infatuation seems to fall little short of the Roman catholics, when they can really believe the wealth and power of a nation to be truly and substantially expressed and represented by scraps of paper! and which are so far from being property, or the true signs of property, that they signify nothing truly, but imposture on one hand, and credulity on the other; and may be

sunk, depreciated, or annihilated by the the most trifling circumstance.

Thus, while the E——h ridicule the mysteries of faith, they have an implicit confidence in the bubbles of state; and yet it is difficult to discover a greater absurdity in supposing one man to eat his god, than another to carry about him a thousand acres of land, or to put a great house or equipage into his pocket-book; which is nevertheless done among the E——h every day, with the greatest self-complacence and security. And, although they should be ready to laugh at the sly priest, who, putting the wafer into their mouths, cries, *hoc est corpus;* yet they have no manner of suspicion of the state juggler, who, putting some flimsy bits of paper into their hands, tells them one is a freehold estate, a second a manor, a third a town house, and a fourth a pipe of wine.

This gross bubble, practised every hour even upon the infidelity of avarice itself, rather exceeds than falls short of the spiritual one; because the objects it converses with are sensible and more open to detection. So that, when we see a wise people embracing phantoms for realities, and running mad, as it were, in schemes of refinement, taste, pleasures, wealth and power, by the sole aid of this political *hocus pocus;* when we contemplate paper-gold and paper-land; pape-rarmies and revenues; a paper-government and a paper-legislature; we are apt to regard the fairy tales, the Travels of Gulliver, and the Arabian Nights Entertainments, as grave relations and historical facts. In truth, I discovered, after a very short residence in E———d, that we live in an enchanted island; and that an individual may almost doubt from the strong propensity there is now towards paper,

whether he is himself made of any better materials.

The F——h surely must have carried the paper manufactory to a great length, when their very houses are not only lined, but built with paper.

We have heard of the golden, silver, and iron ages of the poets; the present, to mark its frivolity, should be called the paper age.

But I find I have gone to greater lengths in this letter, than I originally intended; bear the subjects in mind, my Charlotte, the time may come when they will be necessary to the true comprehension of the character of your dear, dear,

CAROLINE.

LETTER LVI.

Having given you a sketch of the Duke and Duchess, I shall now endeavour to paint the numerous offspring which they possess. In doing this, I have no occasion to descend to individuality; the shades which distinguish them are too insignificant to require particularly to be expressed.

Indeed the attention of the public has of late been very much directed to the manners of this offspring. Volumes have been written upon the subject, and it would appear, that in the opinion of C——l W——e, Mr. W—b—d, S-r F——s B——tt, L—d F——k s—e, &c. &c. the welfare of the n—n depends on the goodness of the children of the House of E———h.

Undoubtedly this subject derived its first importance from the attempts made in a neighbouring country to level all ranks, and to persuade other nations, that superiority of situation is a crime, and that Princes are generally worthless.

It was, therefore, necessary to look a little at home, and to consider whether the dissolute manners of the Duke's sons, in this country, did not tend, as in other nations, to create that contempt which might be the forerunner of their fall.

This enquiry, I understand, was of great importance, and although the discussion was managed neither with decency nor good temper, still beneficial consequences have resulted, and may still result from the seasonable alarm.

The giddy of the family, have become thoughtful, and the dissipated more regular. At least, public display of vice has been publicly discouraged, and a respect for external propriety, and a dread of public licentiousness, is now professed, and it is to be hoped not altogether without some degree of sincerity.

But whatever violations of honor, probity and decorum have been attributed to the Marquis, and to his brothers, they all originate with the irrational method that has been pursued in forming their taste, and in giving them the education of gentlemen. The Marquis was condemned to receive his instruction in the closet of a S——h—n from the hands of l—wy—s and p—ts, and his brothers, for the most part, were bred in G——n universities, and confined to a contracted system of

which latin and greek formed the principal part.

Instead of putting their minds thus into moulds, and hampering them with the trammels of a bigotted and partial education, it would have been more judicious to have given unlimitted scope to their nature, to have laid no bias upon their judgment and genius, and, above all, to have infused no illiberal and positive opinions; but to have suffered them, in the manner of other E——h gentlemen, like the industrious bee, to wander about in quest of intellectual food, to rifle every precious flower and blossom, and, after they had collected materials from every quarter, to range and digest them into a well-compacted and useful body.

Such a conduct might have produced more originality of genius, than is now

to be met with in these young nobles; it might have promoted invention, and enabled their minds, unbeaten and unsubdued by art, to take flights into regions which they now never can explore.

That this is no impracticable scheme, may easily appear from the daring efforts of genius in those who have been little tutored under the discipline of art. Thus, had Homer's genius been formed and chastised by the rigid rules of a s——h m——r, or a G——n professor, his imagination would never have run with such a swift and unbounded career, through every region of nature. Had he lived in our times, and undergone the discipline of your father and uncles, I dare assert, he never would have attained such amazing perfection in composition, or painted men and manners with that truth,

and expressive variety, for which he has been so justly celebrated in all ages. Nay, had the originals themselves, from which this great master drew, been fashioned by art, or what we call academic learning, they never would have reached those heights of prudence and valour they did, nor afforded such entertaining pictures, though Homer himself had finished them. Again, my Charlotte, the great Shakespeare would not have exerted such immense fruitfulness of invention, would not have drawn almost every passion and habit of nature in such inimitable colours, and animated his pieces with such a bold and original spirit, had his mind been fettered in the manner of young nobles, or had the native spring of his genius been cramped with opinions, systems, and a load of useless learning.

There is not much justice or wisdom, then, in condemning the manners of persons who are so imperfectly trained up; nor is it proper in me to attach remarks to a particular house, which apply to the manners of the great throughout the land. I shall therefore give my opinions a wider range than I have lately done.

Indeed, on my leaving G——y, I had promised my dear mother to transmit her a description of the characters and manners of the great of this nation; I did write many letters to that effect, but, as they were intercepted by "the Countess" for purposes hereafter to be described, I shall give you the exact substance of that intercepted correspondence, and at the same time enable you to judge how far my letters were to be considered injurious to the House of E———h, or to the s—e.

Immediately after my arrival, the most impartial observation convinced me, that the character of the manners of this nation, was by no means of abandoned wickedness and profligacy. This degree of degeneracy, indeed, was imputed to it by many: but, to what times has it not been imputed? Present objects are naturally magnified to the human eye, while remote ones, though larger in dimensions, vanish into nothing. Hence the speculative and virtuous, in every age, confining their views to their own period, have been apt to aggravate its manners into the highest degrees of guilt; to satirize, rather than describe; to throw their respective times into one dark shade of horror, rather than mark their peculiar colour and distinctive tints.

How far this nation is from the last period of degeneracy, it were presump-

tion to affirm: at present, it is certain, it is not arrived at it. Whenever this fatal time approaches, my Charlotte, it will come distinguished by its proper and peculiar characters; and whoever shall estimate such times, will find himself under the same circumstance with the great historian, who, in the profligate period of declining Rome, tells us he had nothing to relate, but "false accusations, bloody proscriptions, treacherous friendships, and the destruction of the innocent!!!" But here is the original—Sæva jussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium. Tacit. Annal. lib. IV.

This, we may truly affirm, though singular as it relates to me, is far from the character of the manners of the times: which, on a fair examination, will probably appear to be that of a 'vain, luxurious, and selfish effemina-

cy.' This will be evident from a simple enumeration of acknowledged facts: many of them indeed, in appearance, too trite to merit notice, and too trifling for rebuke; were they not in their tendency, as fatal to the stability of a nation, as maxims and manners more apparently flagitious and great.

As the first habits of infancy and youth commonly determine the character of man, I might trace the effeminacy of the nobility even to their nurseries.

As soon as the puny infant is suffered to peep from this fountain of weakness and disease, he is confirmed in the habits already contracted, by a mistaken tenderness and care. The "school boy's satchel, and shining morning face," once the characteristic of the age itself, are now only to be seen

among the sons of villagers and peasants; while the youth of quality and fortune is wrapt up from the wholesome keenness of the air; and thus becomes incapable of enduring the natural vicissitudes and rigours of his own climate.

Differing from the sons of the Duke of E———h, it is odds, indeed, but the prevalence of fashion places the youth of quality in some public school, where the DEAD languages are taught: and, to do justice to the times, the most considerable among these seminaries were never more ably supplied than the present. But whatever may be the master's ability, the scholars can, in general, reach no farther than WORDS, and he is sent ignorant of things into a world, where the ruling objects that catch the imagination, are the sallies of folly, or of vice.

Thus, like plants hastily removed from their first bed, and exposed to the inclemencies of an unwholesome air, without the intervention of a higher and more enlarged nursery, where stronger shoots might be obtained, the rising youth are checked in their first growths, and either die away into ignorance, or, at most, become dwarfs in knowledge.

The next error that presents itself to observation, is the effeminacy of dress: but which, in all its variety of modern ridicule, is too low for serious animadversion. Yet in this must every man of every rank and age employ himself; for, if defective in these exterior and unmanly delicacies, he will be avoided as a low person whom nobody knows, and with whom one is ashamed to be seen.

Vanity, too, lends her aid to this effeminacy: splendid furniture, a sumptuous side-board, a long train of attendants, an elegant and costly entertainment, for which earth, air, and seas, are ransacked; the most expensive wines of the continent, the childish vagaries of a whimsical dessert; these are the supreme pride of the master, and the admiration or envy of every guest.

Luxury is not idle in her province, but shares with her sister Vanity, in the labours of the day. High soups and sauces, every mode of foreign cookery that can quicken taste, and spur the lagging appetite, is assiduously employed. The end of eating is not the allaying of natural hunger, but the gratification of sordid and debasing appetite. Hence the most inflaming foods, not those which nourish, but those which irritate, are adopted:

while the cool and temperate diets that purify the blood, are banished to tables of inferior taste.

On my first arrival in E——d, I expected in these fashionable meetings, to hear some point of morals, taste in arts and literature, discoursed or canvassed. Alas! these are long since expelled from all the societies of the Sçavoir Vivre. To speak any thing that carries weight or importance, is an offence against good breeding. The supreme elegance is, to trifle agreeably. But, as insipidity of conversation is soon worn out, and as intemperance in wine is not of the character of refined luxury; so, to prevent the stagnation of folly, some awakening amusement is naturally sought for. This great desideratum is at length found. A pleasure which absorbs the whole soul: a pleasure in which there is no satiety; which cloys

not by use, but gains new vigour from enjoyment, is finally introduced to every party in high life. You only need to be informed, my Charlotte, that the pleasure here alluded to, is that desperate one of gaming.

But as the present increasing splendour of dress, furniture, and entertainments, is enormously expensive; what can so naturally create a lust of gold, as the vain ambition of equality, or superiority in this system of effeminate shew? Hence rapacity attends profusion; till the spirit of avarice glides secretly into the heart; and impels the great to that gaming, as a trade, which they had before adopted as a pleasure. But as we read that Cæsar's lust was only the servant of his ambition, so this lust of gold is no more than the handmaid to vain effeminacy. Thus, we see gaming established on the two

great pillars of self-interest and pleasure: and on these foundations seems to rest the midnight riot and dissipation of modern assemblies.

I shall in my next letter proceed to examine the other reigning amusements of the great, and see how far they are, or are not, subject to the charge of "a vain, luxurious, and selfish effeminacy." After this discussion, I shall continue my own more particular memoirs.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LVII.

I should have informed you, my beloved girl, that the Marquis and I had to remove from W——r to L——n in order to assist in the celebration of the f—h of J—e, and that we then repaired to B————e, where your father has been in the constant habit of passing his own b—h-d—y. This period embraces many interesting events and circumstances, but as I draw from it also the materials for my characters of the manners of the great, and as I can revert when necessarry to those occurrences, I shall not now interrupt my disquisitions, but in my usual manner, rapidly, yet faithfully proceed.

Before I came into E———d I imagined, that a knowledge of books, a taste in arts, a proficiency in science, was regarded as a necessary qualification to fashion and greatness. Indeed the annals of the country have transmitted to us the name and memory of men, as eminent in learning and taste, as in rank and fortune. It will not, I presume, be esteemed a satire on the present race, to say, that among the higher ranks, this literary spirit is generally vanished. Reading is now sunk, at best, into a political amusement; and books are no longer regarded as the repositories of taste and knowledge, but as the vehicles of folly, treachery, and licentiousness.

But in justice to the great, another observation must be added. As excess of delicacy has destroyed their force of taste; it has at least one laudable ef-

fect: for, along with this, it has carried off their grossness of obscenity. A strong characteristic this, my Charlotte, of the manners of the times. The untractable spirit of public lewdness is sunk into gentle gallantry, and obscenity itself is grown effeminate.—However, what vice has lost in coarseness of expression, she has gained in a more easy and general admittance: in ancient days, bare and impudent obscenity, like a common woman of the town, was confined to brothels: whereas the double-entendre, like a modern fine lady, is now admitted into the best company; while her transparent covering of words, like a fashionable garment, discloses, while is seem to veil, her nakedness of thought.

Do not wonder, my child, if these leading characters of false delicacy, influence other entertainments of the

great, and be attended with a low and unmanly taste and refinements.—Music, in particular, that divine art, capable of inspiring every thing that is noble or excellent, of rousing every grand passion of the soul, is at length dwindled into a woman's or an eunuch's effeminate trill. The chaste and solemn airs of Corelli, of Gemeniani, and their best disciples; the divine and lofty flights of Caldara, and Marcelli; the elegant simplicity of Bononcine: the manly, the pathetic, the astonishing strains of Handel, are neglected and despised; while, instead of these, the concerts and operas of the metropolis are disgraced with the lowest insipidity of composition, and unmeaning singsong.

The question now concerns not the expression, the grace, the energy, the dignity of the music;—the E———h

go not to admire the composition, but the tricks of the performer; who is then surest of their ignorant applause, when he runs through the compass of the throat, or traverses the finger-board with the swiftest dexterity, and palsied tremulation.

While music is thus debased into effeminacy, her sister-art of painting cannot hope a better fate. For the same dignity of manners must support;—the same indignity depress them. Connoisseurs there are, indeed, who have either taste or vanity; yet even by these, the art is considered as a matter of curiosity, not of influence; a circumstance which proves their taste to be spurious, undirected or superficial.

But with regard to the public eye, this is generally depraved. Neither

the comic pencil, nor the serious pen, have been able to keep alive the taste of nature or of beauty. The fantastic and grotesque have banished both. Every house of fashion is now crowded with porcelain trees and birds, porcelain men and beasts, cross-legged Mandarins and Brahmins, perpendicular lines and stiff right angles:—Every gaudy Chinese rudity: every Egyptian absurdity; every Grecian whim, either in colour, form, attitude, or grouping, is adopted into fashionable use, and become the standard of B——h taste and elegance!

Let us then search the theatre for the remains of manly taste; and here, apparently at least, it must be acknowledged we shall find it. But, as the attractions of the theatre arise from a complication of causes, beyond those of any other entertainment; so, while

the judicious critic admires original excellencies, it may well be questioned whether the great be not drawn by certain secondary circumstances, rather than by a taste for the performance. Need we any other proef of this, than the conduct of a fashionable audience, who sit with the same face of admiration, or insensibility, at a Lear, a Macbeth, an opera, or a pantomime?

These seem to be the main and leading articles of B——h winter delicacies. And as to their summer amusements, I find them much of the same make, only lighter, and, if possible, more trifling. As soon as the season is grown so hot as to make L——n insupportable, the same rage of pleasure, dress, equipage, and dissipation, which in winter had chained them to L——n, now drives them to the country.—For, as a vain and empty mind can never

give entertainment to itself; so, to avoid the tedium of solitude and self-converse, parties of pleasure are formed; the same effemiancies, under new appearances, are acted over again, and become the business of the season. There is hardly a remote corner of the kingdom, where a summer scene of public dissipation is now established. Here the parties meet till the winter sets in, and the separate societies once more meet in L——n.

Thus, my Charlotte, have I attempted for your instruction, a simple delineation of the ruling manners of the great: if any thing like ridicule appears to mix itself with this review, it arises not from the aggravation, but from the natural display of folly.

You may probably ask, why the ruling manners of the women have not

been more particularly delineated?—The reason is, because I have confounded them with the men; their manners are now essentially the same, and in description cannot be separated.—The sexes, in this country, have little other apparent distinction beyond that of person and dress: their peculiar and characterestic manners are amalgamated and lost: the women having advanced into boldness, as the men have sunk into effeminacy.

Having treated on the manners of the great, I could wish to say something of the principles of the times; I mean the principles which tend to counteract mean, malignant, and selfish passions: these are the principle of religion, the principle of honor, and the principle of public spirit; but I fear much I cannot go into such serious enquiries in THIS SERIES of my correspon-

dence. This series once closed, I may be induced to commence a NEW SERIES on more important topics. But, although, at present I am condemned to speak of nothing but of myself, to write of nothing, to think of nothing, to recommend nothing, but myself, still shall I say a few words on those important topics, and then you shall hear more of your

CAROLINE.

LETTER LVIII.

Did I court applause, I would preface this letter with an apology for the ignorance of hinting at religious principle. To suppose the great swayed in their conduct by a respect for religion, is an affront to the delicacy and refinement of their taste.

Hence, the day set apart by the laws of their country for religious service, they deride and insult as a vulgar and obsolete institution; should you propose to them the renewal of family devotion, which concluded the guiltless evening entertainments of their ancestry, you would become an object of their pity rather than of their contempt.

The sublime truths, the pure and simple morals of the gospel, are now despised and trodden under foot.—Can we wonder, if that profession which asserts these truths, and preaches these morals, be treated with a similar contempt? But irreligion knows no bounds, when once let loose; and christianity herself has been obliquely insulted within those consecrated walls, where decency and policy, in the absence of reason and virtue, would for ever have held her in legal reverence.

But, notwithstanding the general contempt of religion among the great, you are not to imagine that the present age is deep in speculations of infidelity. No such thing; for that would imply a certain attention to these subjects; a certain degree of self-converse and thought; and this would clash with the ruling manners of the times. In-

deed there have not been wanting laborious husbandmen who have painfully sown their tares; not in the night season, but in the broad day-light. These have at length shot up into a large and fruitful crop of irreligious implicit faith; for implicit faith is belief or disbelief, without evidence; and why they disbelieve, few of the present age can tell! They have other attentions than the meagre sophisms of irreligion; and are therefore well content with the conclusions without the premises.—Fortunately for mankind, there has arose out of this vile system of disputation and anarchy of belief and disbelief, a religion called the religion of the Quakers, and although the great have nothing to do with this simple and original worship, I shall make a few remarks upon it, because I am conscious you are as yet ignorant of its beauty, importance, and truth.

It appears to me, my Charlotte, that the progress made by this interesting people, vulguarly called Quakers, and officially called friends, above all other sects, in simplifying christianity, and freeing it from those mixtures which have so much disguised and abused it, has been so extraordinary, that it may justly set them at the head of all reformers, and stamp them with a decisive character, in which their little peculiarities of manner are unworthy of notice or remark.

In the first place, they are the only sect who admit no priests or ministers as a separate order of men into their constitution;—an advantage of so capital a nature, that it is well worth purchasing by the institution of a distinct society for that direct purpose only. For what a legion of evils does this at once cut off?—Not to mention

the greater mischiefs which the struggles for wealth and power by an established clergy, have in all countries occasioned. Are not their rivalries, their parties, their controversies, their interests, their intermeddlings, the bane of concord and brotherly affection, in all the communities of separatists?—Does not their ordinate authority frequently as much infringe the rights and liberties of private congregations, as it always does of national churches?—Do they not afford a ready means of laying at the feet of power the political influence of dissenting bodies?

That it never was in the contemplation of the founder of the christian religion to institute such a body of men; and that the supposed necessity of them is contradictory to the notion of a divine revelation freely and clearly communicated in writing, I am, my-

self, perfectly convinced, as well as that all the corruptions, forgeries, and interpolations that deform the pages of scripture, date from their establishment.

Secondly, I find the Quakers are the only people who have compleatly detached religion from state policy, and thereby avoided that detestable combination of two dissimilar interests, which has never failed to spoil and calumniate both. They have confined religion to its proper province of amending the hearts and the lives of men; and have abhorred the plan of making it subservient to the narrow and temporary purposes of a party or a government. They have not dared to enlist the Almighty in the service of a particular nation, or to point his thunders against their fellow-creatures, merely

because their worldly interests interfered.

They have not set apart days for the religious celebration or commemoration of public events, the final consequences of which no man can see, and which are regarded with totally different feelings by different parties.—Keeping their own hands unstained with blood, they have viewed the shedding of blood by others as a subject of humiliation rather than thanksgiving; and if ever they offer prayers for national blessings, it is for those of peace, brotherly love, and righteousness, in which they desire that all mankind should equally participate, and as strenuously endeavour to effect.

Thirdly, though I do not know that they differ from other christians in their speculative notions of the efficacy of

prayer, and the interposition of Providence in human concerns, yet I can see that they are much more wary and reserved than others in making petitions for particular favors; and hence, according to my judgment, they preserve a greater consistency in the theory of the divine perfections, and inculcate a more tranquil and reverential submission to the will of the Diety. In this respect they are a strong contrast to the puritans of the last century, and the first methodists of this, whose copious and minute addresses to heaven often degenerated into indecent familiarity, and a querulous impudent importunity.

Fourthly, by boldly discarding, instead of endeavouring to simplify and rationalize, those rites of religion, which, from a kind of emblematic veil thrown about them, will always be

abused and misunderstood by the vulgar and fanciful, they have eradicated from amongst themselves a vast mass of superstition and error, from which no sect that retains them is entirely free; and which, in some, has almost overwhelmed all that is valuable in revelation. How far they have been justified in doing this, from the authority of scripture, I do not enquire; but the advantage of having got rid of such inlets to false opinion, must be manifest to all who are capable of making comparisons, and of valuing the peace and concord of mankind.

On the whole, it appears to me, that no society of christians ever acquired the essential of their religion at so cheap a rate, or in so pure a form; and these privileges are so intrinsically valuable, that I should not doubt of the ability of such a sect to maintain its

ground, even though it were to resign its little peculiarities of speech and dress. But this is a measure I would by no means recommend them; their dress, in particular, should never be renounced; its simplicity may expose them to the ridicule of fools, but at the same time secure them the esteem of the wise and good. That you may be of the latter number is the prayer of

CAROLINE.

LETTER LIX.

HAVING communicated to you, my dear girl, some idea of the religious principle of the great, let us next examine how it fares with their principle of honor. By this principle is meant, the desire of fame, or the applause of men, directed, as it invariably should be, to the end of public happiness.

Now this great ambition, which in other times wrought such wonderful effects, is no longer to be found in this country.—It is the pride of equipage, the pride of title, the pride of fortune, or the pride of dress, that have assumed the empire over B——h souls, and levelled their ambition with the dirt.

The honest pride of virtue is no more; or, where it happens to exist, is overwhelmed by inferior vanities.—A man who should go out of the common road of life, in pursuit of glory, and serve the public at the expence of his ease, his fortune, or his pleasure, would be stared or laughed at by the great, as a silly fellow, who meddled with things that did not belong to him; and as an idiot who preferred shadows to realities, and needless toil to pleasurable enjoyment. The laurel wreath, once aspired after as the highest object of ambition, would now be rated at the market-price of its materials, and derided as a gingerbread crown. And if its modern substitutes, the ribbon or the coronet, be eagerly sought for, it is not that they are regarded as the distinctions of public virtue and peculiar merit, but as the ensigns of vanity and place.

But what implies or proves the general extinction of the principle of honor, is a peculiar circumstance, which at first view seems to challenge praise. —It has been weakly attributed to the moderate and forgiving spirit of these times, that no age ever so patiently suffered its ruling follies to be laughed at. But this, in truth, is a superficial and inadequate representation, as well as solution, of the fact. The great not only suffer their ruling vices and follies to be ridiculed, but they cordially join in the ridicule, and are the first to laugh. —Was there ever a juster picture drawn of modern effeminacy and nonchalence, than in the characters of Fribble and of the member of the four-in-hand club?—Did ever dramatic characters raise louder peals of laughter and applause, even among those who sat for the likeness?—They hear with pleasure, they acknowledge the truth of the

representation, they admire the portraiture of their own follies; they go home, and without a blush repeat them!—The truth is, therefore, the great can see and own their vices and follies, without being touched with compunction or moved by shame: a circumstance which ancient times justly regarded as the strongest indication of degenerate morals, and of incorrigible manners and minds.

It appears then, that the principle of honor is either lost, or totally corrupted; that no generous thirst of praise is left among the E———h;—that their ambitions are trifling and unmanly as their pleasures;—that wealth, titles, dress, equipage, sagacity in gaming or wagers, splendid furniture, and a table, are the sole fountains from which they desire to draw respect to themselves, or applause from others; they

aspire to folly, and are proud of meanness: thus, the genuine principle of honor is perverted, and dwindled into a contemptible unmanly vanity.

Can it be imagined, that, amidst this general defect of religion and honor, the great and comprehensive principle of public spirit, or love of their country, can gain a place in their breasts?—That mighty principle so often feigned, so seldom possessed; which requires the united force of upright manners, generous religion, and unfeigned honor to support it!—What strength of thought or conscious merit can there be in effeminate minds, sufficient to elevate them to this principle, whose object is—the happiness of a kingdom?

To speak therefore without flattery, this principle is less felt among the

E———h, than even those of religion and true honor. So infatuated are they in contempt of this powerful principle, that they deride the inhabitants of a sister-kingdom, for their national attachments and regards. So little accustomed are they to go, or even think beyond the beaten track of private interest, in all things that regard their country, that he who merely does his duty in any conspicuous station, is looked on as a prodigy of public virtue.

Yet in other times, when this principle was in force, enterprizes were formed, and deeds done, which it would now be thought phrenzy to attempt.—Think what a friend will do for a friend, a sister for a brother, a lover for his mistress, a parent for his child; even that, in all its fulness of affection, in other times, has been the aim, and the work of public virtue, doing or suffering for its country's good.

Domestic affections are not yet generally extinguished. There are kind fathers, kind mothers, and affectionate children, sisters, brothers: humanity to distress is also prevalent: But whether the effeminacy of the great be not one of the sources of this humanity, might probably be a question more curious in its progress, than profitable or agreeable in its solution.—However that may be, let us be modest in our claims, and confess, that their affections seldom reach farther than their relations, their friends, or individuals in distress. Happy for them they reach so far. Happy were it for the world and for posterity, that they were of a more enlarged extent!—In the mean time, they must, with due abasement of heart acknowledge, that the love of their country is no longer felt; and that, except in a few minds of uncom-

mon greatness, the principle of public spirit, exists not, and is absolutely lost!

It is not affirmed or implied, my dear Charlotte, in this general review, that every individual has assumed the garb and character of false delicacy, and uncontrouled self-love: as in manly ages, some will be effeminate; so, in effeminate times, the manly character will sometimes be found: as in times of principle, some will be void of principle; so in times when principle is derided, in some superior minds principle will maintain its abode.—But from the general combinations of manners and principles, in every period of time, will always result one ruling and predominant character; as from a confused multitude of different voices, results one general murmur, and strikes the distant ear, or from a field covered with flocks, herds, or armies, though various

in themselves, results one general and permanent colour, and strikes the distant eye.

It is enough, then, for you, my dear maid, if, from a proper point of view, I have fixed the ruling colour of the manners and principles, of the great, for on this depends the ruling character of the nation and the times.

As it appears, therefore, from this simple and impartial delineation, that parade and pleasure are the main objects of pursuit:—As the general habit of refined indulgence is strong, and the habit of enduring is lost:—as the general spirit of religion, honor, and public love, are weakened or vanished; as these manners are therefore left to their own workings, uncontrouled by principle: I may with truth and candour

conclude, that the ruling character of the present times is that of a vain, luxurious, and selfish effeminacy.

This sketch of the ruling manners of the E——h is taken from the intercepted correspondence before alluded to. I have omitted in this abridged sketch, many facts and circumstances that related to illustrious individuals: the motive of their suppression on the present occasion will appear to your own amiable and tenderin d . Adieu!

CAROLINE.

LETTER LX.

I have in my several last letters, delineated the ruling manners and principles of the B——h; I must now assume a severer tone, and reason upon their influence on my individual happiness, reputation, and character in the s—e.

There required but a short residence at W———r and at St. J——'s, to determine the effect and intention of this influence. Indeed there was not a person in the service of the House of E————h, that did not endeavour to humble me in my own opinion, and to injure me in that of my illustrious relatives.

"THE COUNTESS," who was charged with the care of decorating my person, employed all her art to render me unnatural and ridiculous; and the ladies of my household, who were of her appointment, paid their court to her by propagating such anecdotes as would best accord with her ambition of drawing a line of eternal separation between me and the Marquis to whom I was allied.

The measures she at first pursued were absurd and ingenious,—those she finally had recourse to were infamous and criminal to the highest degree.

On the eve of my marriage she endeavoured to impress me with a conviction, that, to please my husband, I "must become intelligent in the art of amusing," and adopt the manners and appearances of those E———h ladies

whom he was pleased to regard with the greatest degree of admiration and praise. That is, that my manners should be destitute of grace, and my appearance of virtue; for what else could I comprehend from the method she took to make me, what she called amiable. —Having made this attempt to debauch my mind, she next proceeded to disfigure my person. Though fair, she covered me with paint; though rouged by nature, she daily daubed my cheeks with red; though my nails and the palms of my hands were inferior to none in carnation, she insisted on heightening their colour by applications as painful as absurd.

In the first instance I was so much a dupe as to submit to this horrible outrage,—nor did I recover from the delusion, or discover the motive of the Countess, till I acquired the character

of a creature made up out of dissimulation and art. The Duchess, in particular, adopted this idea of me, and, in consequence, ever after looked upon me with as much displeasure as if I in reality wore the impress of dissimulation.

With a mind thus predisposed she was liable, notwithstanding the goodness of her nature, to lend attention to reports calculated to do me injury, and when she was informed that her son and I had separate chambers, she was filled with indignation—but not with astonishment, for she was prepared to believe that my manners were so "gross," that it was impossible for the Marquis to esteem me.—The Duchess, therefore, saw me leave W———r and St. J——s's without regret, and when I took my leave of her, previously to my accompanying the Marquis to B————e, I discovered

a coldness in her farewell, which informed me of a circumstance, now too clear, that I had no place in her heart.

In all this time, I was treated by the Marquis with the most respectful attentions, and I again assert, that, were it not for the variety of causes enumerated in my letter, descriptive of our wedding night, we were otherwise disposed to enjoy felicity in the society of each other. Such was his conduct, that I began to feel for him an esteem which nearly amounted to affection; and when I found I was likely to become a mother, I began sincerely to wish to remove every thing that obstructed my domestic happiness and love.

But B———n was not a proper theatre for the realization of virtuous views.

"The Countess" inhabited the same house with myself and husband; Mrs. F——— lived in the immediate vicinity, and several other women of a similar cast disposed themselves in such a manner, as to attract his attention which ever way he turned his regard. While thus attacked and surrounded, and considering his knowledge of the state of my heart and affections, it is matter of astonishment, that his behaviour to me was regulated with so much tenderness and good-breeding: with so much kindness, that it alarmed the jealousy of "The Countess", and made her resolve, as soon after came to my knowledge, to banish me from his presence immediately, totally, and for ever!—As a bad intention seldom wants a good argument, she soon was presented with one: but before I expose its nature to you, my dear Charlotte, I will attempt to describe the day and

the circumstances to which it owes its birth.

Indeed it is not easy for any one who was at B———n at the time to which I allude to turn the mind entirely from the subject. It was a magnificence every way suited to the birth-day of a man, who is the glory of his nation and the pride of his sex. Homer tells us, that when the offspring of Jupiter presented themselves among a crowd of deities, they were distinguished from the rest by their superior stature and grace. Such was the appearance of the Marquis among the visitors of B———n. In the midst of the first nobles, warriors, and statesmen of the land, he raised in the beholder the idea of a superb picture, where, notwithstanding the diversity of pleasing objects that fill up the canvas, the principal figure immediately takes the eye, and

fixes the attention. In short, the Marquis is in many points of view the most conspicuous nobleman in Europe, whether he be considered in respect to his very splendid talents, to the striking qualities of his heart, or to the various and consummate skill of the courtier, and the accomplishments of the gentleman. But I shall not insist on the numerous acquirements of his mind, and you will be satisfied to hear me say, that when he discovered those admirable qualities for which he was early famed; and you, my child, ought to rejoice to see them exerted at a period where you yourself are made happy by their influence. But there was no part of the Marquis's character which I observed with greater pleasure, than that behaviour by which he so much endeared himself to his father by his marriage with me, notwithstanding all his previous attachments: though, indeed, I

have no reason to be surprised at this mutual intercourse of duty and affection, when I consider so good a son, possessing in the same sacred person, the kindest of fathers, and the best of masters. And here it is natural for me, since your birth, my sweet girl, to congratulate the friends of the House of E———h in their good fortune, who see the chief of that House blessed with a numerous issue, among whom are heirs male and female in two direct descents, which has not happened in the time of any Duke of E———h since the reign of his Grace's ancestor E——d the Third, and is a felicity not enjoyed by the friends of any other of the noblemen of Europe, who are his contemporaries.

Those friends are like men entertained with the view of a spacious landscape, where the eye passes over one

pleasing prospect into another, till the sight is lost by degrees in a succession of delightful objects, and leaves us in the persuasion that there remain still more behind.

But to return, as a chearful temper is the necessary result of the qualities I have attributed to the Marquis, so it shone out in all the parts of his conversations, on his birth-day, and dissipated all those apprehensions which naturally hung on the timorous or the modest, who were admitted to the honor of his presence. There was none who did not listen with pleasure to a person in so high a station, who condescended to make himself thus agreeable, by mirth without levity, and by wit without ill-nature.

The Marquis is, indeed, possessed of all those talents, which make con-

versation either delightful or improving. As he has a fine taste for the modern arts, and is skilled in several modern languages, his discourse at dinner was not confined to the ordinary subjects or forms of conversation, but adapted itself, with an uncommon grace to every occasion, and to the high entertainment of the foreign ministers and strangers who were of the party. All were delighted with the agreeable turn which appeared in his sentiments to all;—a turn which was suited to the delicacy of his situation, the politeness of his manners, and the splendour of his quality.

No man in the kingdom has a manner more complacent and elegantly condescending, and there is that witchery, that magic in his smile, which makes him adored whenever he presents himself; and so powerfully did

he appreciate the affections of the people, which were manifest by their rejoicings on the auspicious occasion, that he declared it to be the proudest day of his life.

He received his numerous visitors with an easy civility, the genuine result of true politeness. The first ceremony being over, they were at liberty to wander over the P——n and situation, which were such as to strike at first sight. They were an instance of of that good taste, which seemed, in truth, to discover itself on all hands, that the Marquis had made choice of so beautiful a place of residence, and that in the arrangement of the objects, furniture and decorations, nature and art went hand-in-hand; there was no studied regularity, no perpetual sameness, but there reigned throughout an easy simplicity of manner, a certain

agreeable disorder; which, as it resemqled nature in its beauty, resembled it also in its use. Nature, usefulness, and elegant simplicity, took place of that operose grandeur, that studied ornament, that incumbered magnificence, which are the characteristics of the Marquis's town house.

But it would be vain to think of drawing into the compass of this letter, the many delightful objects, and the many pleasures of such a birth-day; and it would be still more impossible to convey an idea of the night by which it was followed.

According to the custom of the day, and of the place, the company broke up after coffee, and formed into various and separate little parties, for the purpose of parading the S——e, or of rambling along the sea shore. C——n

P——e, the gentleman who had the conduct of my voyage from G———y, was of the company; I had not seen him for some time, and therefore felt a peculiar satisfaction in this opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with him, and of testifying to him how much I remembered his kind attention.

The proposition for walking being made, the Marquis gave me the most public and ostensible proof of his respect and esteem, by proffering me his arm; and I, with all that candour and simplicity which mark my manners, declined the honor, saying—'No Marquis, I have not seen C——n P——e for an age, I shall take his arm and converse with him on subjects of old.'

In effect, I took his arm, and followed by "the Countess," some ladies of my suite, and the Marquis and his

friends, formed, according to their dispositions and attachments, and passed to the S——e, from whence, after taking a few turns, we directed our steps to the shore.

It is now too late, my dear girl, to continue this subject. Besides, as it involves matter of considerable interest and importance, it merits a distinct communication from your attached and tender mother.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXI.

The fineness of the night spoken of in my last, my dear Charlotte, tempted me to ramble for a time, and to a distance by no means calculated on my departure from the P——n. The night was, indeed, excessively fine, and it would be utterly impossible to describe the beauty of the moon and of the stars, reflected from the bosom of a sea, which was as serene as the heavens which they served to illuminate.

Seriously, my child, a woman had need be of a more than ordinary, cautious, and philosophic make, or of an infinitely stupid and insensible one, to attend to the illustrious solemnities of the night, without warmer emotions

than a merely speculative admiration. Struck with the surpassing splendour and majesty of the appearance, and cheered by the delightful influences of the all heavenly beam, how hard is it to suppress the rising transports of an eager gratitude. But, unfortunately for the great, a certain false refinement of living, supposed the privilege of higher birth and education, cast a gloom over this embellished scene, and, as I looked around for the parties which had left the P——n with me, I found that they had separated or returned to their respective homes.

I was the more astonished at this, because, for my part, the entertainment I experienced on the silent shore, in the presence of the glittering sea and spangled heavens, was of more unparalleled beauty, delicacy, and magnificence, than the most elaborate re-

finements of the P——n; than the most exquisite labours of human elegance and art; than the heightened ornaments and august grandeurs of the Marquis's establishments; than the glittering œconomy and wanton lustres of his palaces; than the studied pageantry and decorations of his chambers! But, however transporting the night was, I felt a considerable diminution of my enthusiasm, when I missed my company, called in vain for "the Countess," and was reminded by C——n P——e, whom I held all the time engaged in the most interesting conversation, that, he feared, it was extremely late!

Awakened by this apprehension, I began to reflect upon the peculiarity of my circumstances: this was the second time that a strange combination of occurrences gave C——n P——e my

society in the solitary gloom of night, and it was possible each time to interpret the causes of such interviews into principles adverse to the integrity of a friend, and to the chastity of a wife.

Yet these considerations gave me little uneasiness: virtue is prone neither to terror nor to suspicion. I was not accountable for the early departure of the company from the walk, and the separation from "THE COUNTESS" was an accidental event, or a criminal intention *on her* part.

Returning too near the Crescent, it struck me and C——n P——e, that we lost the parties by their having gone up the bank, on the presumption that we had taken that direction.

Directed by this idea, we pursued the same course, and resolved to return

to the P——n, by the hill at the back of the town. This only served to multiply my errors, for, being missed at the P——n, the Marquis proposed to go, and meet me on my return from the shore, and not finding me there, had returned at the instant I entered with C——n P—e from the hill road.

I know not what was passing in the mind of the Marquis: the company was assembled to supper: he was too accomplished a gentleman to manifest before them any manner of dissatisfaction of mind: nor should I perhaps have suspected him to be in the least disturbed, had he not, on my retiring to my apartment, declined taking my hand, in his usual kind and gallant manner, and of wishing me good-night in the accents of a friend. As to "THE COUNTESS," she briefly observed, that as I gave the society of C——n P—e

so decided a preference as to have refused the proffered arm of the Marquis, she thought her attendance might be deemed intrusive, and that therefore, she mingled in the company and lost me in the manner I described.

The following morning every mystery began to subside, and all the horrors of my future destiny began to appear. The Marquis desired my company in his library: I complied with some emotion of mind, and this emotion was considerably increased, on my perceiving that he walked up and down the apartment with an agitation that could only arise from some jealous fear.

The truth is, that men of gallantry, are of all others the most subject to the transports of a jealous suspicion, and to convert the most feeble appearances

into the most damning and confirmed facts. They know not what it is to repose confidence in the discretion of a wife. Unfaithful themselves, they perceive not that the infidelities of which they are jealous are the well merited recompence of their own inconstancy, or of their criminal caprices.

The Marquis was in too great a state of perturbation to speak—he was content to put an open note into my hand, and to watch my countenance whilst I read. The note was directed to himself, was disguised, and anonymous, and in these words.

" Cease to be astonished at the par-
" tiality of your w—e for C————n
" P——e! enquire of THE COUNTESS
" and of her attendants on her voyage
" to this country, and you will learn
" that it is not the first time she has

" spent an evening in solitude with
" him.—Enquire!"

' I have enquired,' said the Marquis, and paused.

" And what is the result of your
" generous enquiry?" replied I, with more surprize and resentment than serenity and prudence.

' Reserve your spirits, madam,' answered the Marquis, with an appearance of an assumed composure and indifference—' Reserve your spirits for
' some more necessary occasion. I
' have made the necessary enquiries of
' THE COUNTESS, and of others, and
' the result is, that we must part. I
' could forgive your original attachment
' for the unfortunate Algernon, but she
' who stoops to promiscuous amours,
' shall never have the sanction of my
' name, nor the protection of my house.'

The Marquis may have said more, but he had no sooner mentioned the name of Algernon and pronounced the horrible words "promiscuous amours," than all my courage abandoned me, and I sunk to the earth oppressed with that terror and confusion which is thought only to belong to a guilty mind.

The state into which I was thrown by an annunciation so stigmatizing to me, and so fatal to the innocent being but forming to life in my womb, hindered the Marquis from putting this threat into immediate execution, and I remained some time longer in the possession of his rank and splendour, but not in the enjoyment of his society and esteem.—Indeed, independent of the jealousy which had taken possession of his mind, and which I had too much pride to strive to oblitcrate, we

discovered that we entered into the marriage-state, with very different dispositions and qualities. He was gay, and luxurious, I was serious, of simple manners, and fond of a domestic and rural life. Hence, after this unfortunate B—h-d-y, he felt himself at liberty to roam from one beauty to another, from one public amusement to another; while I as carefully avoided the crime of the one, and the insipidity of such other entertainments, except in the latter instance, when I was occasionally compelled to comply with the ceremonious duties of the high station in which it was my peculiar calamity to be placed.—Excuse me, my Charlotte, I am interrupted.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXII.

In process of time this difference of inclinations, setting aside the cause of unfounded jealousy, produced a permanent coldness between us, and, at length, on the part of the Marquis, a dislike little short of aversion. He gradually estranged himself entirely from me; resided with different mistresses, and in different places, as suited his disposition, and proposed to me a plan for a separate establishment as the only means of promoting our mutual satisfaction and ease.

I do not hesitate to confess to you, my beloved child, that were it not for the apprehension of branding the burthen of my womb, I would instantly

have come into this measure, and have gone down to D——p in D——ons—e, a place proposed, to pass the remainder of the season; but when I reflected on the irreparable injury such a sudden separation would necessarily inflict on my first-born, I found myself deeply afflicted, and I resolved to try every means a gentle and tender nature could suggest, to recall the respect and the attentions of my husband;—but in vain! ——the more solicitous I appeared to regain him, the more he shunned me; and to this slight began a system of harshness, which finally made me agree to a plan of separation already known to you and to the world.

I shall therefore pass over this painful separation; I shall pass over also the occurrences of many years; of your birth; my visit to D——ns—e, and a variety of incidents that would tend

more to swell than to illuminate this correspondence; and I shall briefly state, that finding all attempts to make an impression on him fruitless, I at length desisted from them, and fixed my residence at B———h, where I was least likely to interrupt the harmony of the Marquis, or that of any of his family or friends.

There, my beloved child, I studiously attended to your infantine wants; there I anticipated your infant cares; there I passed my time in a kind of solitary seclusion from the world; happy in the enjoyment of you, my Charlotte; happy in the conviction of a conscience void of offence, and still, FOR YOUR SAKE, nourishing a secret hope, that the Marquis would, at length, be convinced of his injustice; and that he would restore me to his own and to his country's opinion by manifesting to-

wards me every public and private evidence of returning regard and affection.

Patiently and resigned I waited;—nor did I wait altogether in vain. As you advanced in years, the Marquis, who indulged in his full swing of extravagance, and who had with him "THE COUNTESS," a woman that instead of restraining him in it, urged him on his wild career, and contributed to involve him in many serious difficulties, began to reflect; but to complete his misfortune, before the period of reflection, "THE COUNTESS," finding he was going fast, appropriated a sum, which was intended for the discharge of his B——n debts, to her own use, and at the same time connected herself with some PERSONAGES who were the avowed enemy of the Protector whom she so shamefully sold and abused.

But, to return to my observation: the Marquis began to perceive, and to feel the full weight of the crime he committed in suspecting me of a dishonorable act. He now, with the deepest remorse, recollected my confidence, my integrity, my resignation, my sufferings, and my patience.

During his round of extravagance he had frequently heard me mentioned, by persons almost strangers to me, for my exemplary conduct in retirement, and the manner in which I always spoke of him, without the least mixture of reproach or blame, but, on the contrary, with a tender regret at my own inability to ween him from his errors. He resolved, therefore, to restore me, if not to his arms, to his house, and to make trial of the full extent of that generous affection, and of that patient virtue, of which I had given such proofs, and of which he had heard so much.

A first interview, after a long, and rather ungracious, absence, you will naturally suppose was the greatest difficulty for him to adjust with propriety. He came at length to my residence at B——h, and walked some time in the garden, considering in what manner he should proceed on entering the house. Here his good fortune interposed, and suddenly effected for him what he could not satisfy himself in planning.

As he passed near an alcove, he perceived me sitting within, reading, and you, his only child, playing innocently with a favorite dog in the same place. He viewed me for some time with delight, and it was evident that you, my sweet Charlotte, appeared in his eyes an angel. His features shone with all their natural grace and goodness, though slightly clouded with an air of melancholy.

Accustomed as he had been so long to the vice and falsehood of "THE COUNTESS" and her prototypes, the beauty of your innocence and my virtue flushed upon him irresistibly. He could bear his feelings no longer. He hastened to me, took me to his arms, and as I afterwards presented my seat for him to sit on, he gently took me by the hand, and kissed it with the most endearing tenderness. He drew you with equal tenderness to his knee. In an instant, I united my arms to yours about his neck, without enquiring the cause of this sudden conversion, without upbraiding him for past errors!

An explanation of the most affectionate kind ensued: on his part a sad confession of his faults; on mine an ardent declaration of belief in his sincerity. As for you, he embraced you with an extacy of tenderness, and kiss-

es—a bond of re-union, whose artless lispings and innocent tears, contributed to knit our hearts more firmly together.

Thus reconciled, and having passed the day, if not in delight, in content and happiness, it was proposed by your father that I should return his visit at his house in P———, and that he would there, in the presence of his friends, express his regret at our separation, and invite me once again to resume my station at the head of his family and house. And he was as good as his word. On the day after his return to town, he directed L—d T———w, that great good man, to call upon me; to strengthen my determination of residing with him, and to fix upon the day that he might expect to receive me with the formality due to so important an occasion.

Determined to comply with the wishes of your father, and resolved to relieve his embarrassed affairs, by withdrawing him from the society of those, whose extravagance were so wantonly dissipating his fortune and energy both of body and mind, I repaired to P— M— on a day appointed, and there met L—d T———w, L—d E——e, Mr. S——n, and many others, who had the real interest of the Marquis the most sincerely at heart.

In evidence of my sincerity, I brought you, my dear little advocate, to be the arbiter between your father and myself, and I advanced to the Marquis, as he entered the drawing-room, with that kind of honest air, which convinced every one present, that by patience and virtue, I wished to recover and retain his respect or affections, and by living with him, I should feel it my

pride and pleasure to advance and secure his lasting happiness. Indeed I expressed this much by words as well as by appearance, and L—d T——w united our hands, and our friends congratulated us with more enthusiasm and joy than was displayed on our original alliance.

Nor did you, my lovely child, escape your share of notice. Your father took you to his arms, presented you to his friends, and then addressed you in these endearing words, "Sweet Char-
"lotte! you shall be the comfort of
"my age. You shall be the witness
"of my veneration for your excellent
"mother, of my domestic felicity! of
"my attachment to her!"

Excuse me, I can proceed no longer with such recollections!

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXIII.

I BROKE off my last letter, my dear maid, rather abruptly: the recollections were painful, and yet it is necessary that they should be revived. It is necessary that you should know the virtues of your father as well as the calamities of your mother. I write without prejudice; my daughter shall hear nothing but impartial truth.

The manner in which your father spoke to me and caressed you, took off any thoughts of doubt from the minds of friends respecting our reunion. Would that you could see him as I did, when he introduced you as the heir to his dignities and estates. How sweetly

and affectionately he looked! How soothing and consolatory did he speak! He regarded you as the sweet tie of connubial bliss, and he esteemed me as the instrument which was to redeem him from a life irksome and unhappy! It would be difficult to recollect a moment so pregnant with sensations, at once so honorable and so interesting to the mind. But, alas! it was indeed a moment. A delusion vain, which was dissipated by the entrance of L—d E—t, brother to the Marquis, and who was sent express from W——r, to communicate with your father on an important affair, that required instant attention. They both retired. In a little while L—d T——w was sent for, next L—d E——e, and finally I was left alone, for you and your attendants had withdrawn, in the vast and spacious room.

In this dreary interval, a flash of light gleamed across my mind. I divined the purport of L—d E——t's mission! The C———r entered the room. He approached me with his usual respect; he began to address me with consolation and tenderness; but I was not to be deceived. I stood aghast. I felt manifest tekens of dismay; I shook with apprehension; drops of sweat stood upon my brow, and as his L—ds—p attempted to speak, I commanded him to be silent, and to order my equipages immediately to the door.

"It is but too true," said his L—p, "you have divined the cruel na-"ture of the express. Your reunion "is retarded by desire of the F——y, "for motives which I shall hereafter "have the honor to explain.

Order my horses, my L—d, repeated I. He obeyed, and in a few moments, I precipitated myself into my chariot, with the sensation of a wretch, stupified by blows, and regardless of what became of the remainder of her tortured life.

You, my Charlotte, were my only hope! To you, alone, could I look for consolation in the hour of affliction, and, perhaps, for succour in the hour of oppression or calamity!

These reflections, which I was pursuing with all the emotion natural to my character, were interrupted by the arrival of L—d T——w, who sent in his name, and a request to have an interview with me. Grieved at having treated him with so much petulancy in the morning, and proud of an opportunity to make an atonement for such

imprudence, I not only admitted him instantly, but rose on his entrance, and taking him by the hand, begged of him to reconcile me to myself, by indulging me with his forgiveness. This he most graciously accorded me, at the same time observing his ignorance of my offence, and then proceeded to inform me, that he thought it his duty to hasten after me to explain the cause of the Marquis's conduct, and to tell me———

"But rather let me be silent," continued the amiable C————r, "for "of what can I speak to a Princess, "who is so dear to every E——h—n's "heart? Alas! Madam, of what can "I speak, but of the sorrows of my "soul? The express, which interrupted your reunion, was from the Du"chess of E———h. Her Grace is "justly offended with a packet of let-

" ters which you confided some time
" ago to the Rev. Mr. R. That gen-
" tleman, on his declining to proceed
" to Berlin, gave them to 'THE COUN-
" TESS' for you; 'THE COUNTESS' dis-
" closed some events to the Duchess,
" which she was convinced your let-
" ters would corroborate: they were
" opened, and, as I have observed,
" though they do not corroborate any
" fact, still they have irritated the Du-
" chess to such a degree, that she has
" insisted on the Marquis to preserve
" himself separate from you, till an
" enquiry is made into the truth of
" those reports, which now sully your
" illustrious character, conduct, and
" name."

Gracious God! my L—d, interrupted I, to what reports, to what charges do you allude? I have never done or said any-thing for which I should blush; do tell me, then, what it is that irri-

tates the Duchess, or that sullies my character, conduct, or name?

" Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure
" as snow, thou shalt not escape ca-
" lumny——"

Was the first reply made by his Lordship; he then proceeded thus—

" Though separate chambers are, un-
" fortunately, too fashionable in high
" life, to be an object of surprize, still
" it was a peculiar calamity, that this
" summary species of divorce was so
" soon resorted to by you, and the
" Marquis; and still more so, as it
" was scarcely preparatory to a more
" serious estrangement, and separate
" establishments. Soon after this lat-
" ter event, you retired to this place,
" devoting your youth to retirement,
" and burying those talents which were

" cultivated to adorn society, in the
" solitary domestic amusements of a
" recluse. And here I am proud to
" say, your virtues have risen superior
" to your persecution. Ever mindful
" of the peculiar delicacy of your un-
" happy lot, you have studiously con-
" ducted yourself with such amiable,
" unrepining fortitude, as did and still
" does claim the sympathy and admi-
" ration, not only of your particular
" friends, but of the community at
" large. But slander—slander has sud-
" denly invaded your tranquillity, even
" in this privacy. A calumny the most
" bold, wanton, and unwarrantable, is
" circulated to your dishonor, accusing
" you of infidelities, without however
" adducing one atom of proof, as sup-
" port of these barbarous charges.

" It is, notwithstanding, highly in
" your favor, at least so I view it, that

" on a question of so much import-
" ance to you, to your daughter, and
" to the nation, and during the length-
" ened period it has agitated the pub-
" lic mind, only one solitary female,
" from the whole herd of calumniators,
" has attempted to urge any-thing like
" facts derogatory to your honor. THE
" COUNTESS, who is the author of
" these visionary charges, shields her
" person from public detestation, by
" bribing others to propagate her sen-
" timents; and although she professes
" to be guided by the most disinterest-
" ed principles, and to act on the true
" claims of justice; it is very evident
" to me, that her anecdotes are enve-
" nomed, and so daringly bold, that,
" unsupported as they are beyond her
" assertion, and, contradicted as they
" are by public opinion, it is matter of
" wonder to me, how such temerity
" has been countenanced by the Du-

" chess, and how it has escaped the
" most exemplary punishment. But
" it is shameful to relate, that this
" scandalous woman, reprobated as
" she is by every body, is hearkened
" to by every body, and that she has
" made that deep impression on the
" minds of the Marquis's F——y,
" which, I fear, nothing but the most
" minute investigation can possibly
" efface.

" With respect to myself, amiable
" Princess," continued the C———r,
" I confess, I have read her relation to
" the Duchess with the most marked
" indignation. In the character of a
" moral and pious woman, she relates
" stories that no person ever thought of
" before—stories, that like elemental
" fires, flash before us, and leave us
" trembling with horror and amaze-
" ment."

As his L—s—p paused after this sentence, and appeared to expect a reply, I assumed strength to speak, and, I believe, I addressed him nearly in these words—'Well, my Lord, as it is im-'possible to say who is the blameable 'party for the distressing involvements 'alluded to, and as reports are circula-'ted by the wicked, or unthinking to 'my dishonor, and to the disadvantage 'of the Marquis, I am decidedly anx-'ious, that, for the recovery of my re-'putation, the credit of my husband, 'the prosperity of my child, the good 'of posterity, and the satisfaction of 'the k—d—m, some enquiry should 'be instituted into the reports of my 'conduct, and that the enquiry may 'be so public and so ample, that the 'nation may be enabled thereby to form 'a correct judgment both of my virtue 'and the integrity of my heart. Be 'assured, therefore, my L—d, that I

'have no objection to the most minute 'enquiry. On the contrary, I demand 'it of you as a right. And the people, 'too, have a right to know why I am 'accused, by whom accused, and 'whether I am guilty or guiltless. Ad-'vise the Duchess, then, to bring me 'before my accusers, whoever they 'may be, and to afford me an oppor-'tunity of proving the falseness of 'their calumnies, or of submitting to 'the evidence that may prove the ac-'cusations to be real.'

I had no sooner concluded, than his L——p rose up, with an expression of extreme satisfaction, and, on assuring me that I should be doomed to experience no additional pang, and that the purity of *S-cc-ss—n* should not be brought in question upon no other foundation than vile calumny, he took his leave and departed for town.

A considerable time, however, elapsed, before I heard any more of the enquiry, which I so ardently recommended. The truth is, you, my dear child, were in some measure, the cause of this delay. You had now attained an interesting age, and was the admiration of every body. Your proficiency in music, dancing and drawing, was the theme of universal panegyric; nor were your studies by any means confined to these outward, though elegant accomplishments. Your mind was richly stored with literature, and the graces seemed to have marked my little Charlotte for their own. In short, you became a great favorite with all the F——y, but particularly so with your G——df——r; that best and most honorable of men. Your father, too, was proud in the possession of so beauteous a treasure, and THOSE WHO FIRST intended to oppose your *S-cc-ss—n*, in

favor of your uncle F———k, &c. united with the F——y, and were urgent to preserve your b—h-r—t from future perplexities or doubt.

" From future perplexities!" what perplexities? I shall make this question the subject of another letter, in the mean time, I shall only observe, that while the wickedness of invention was at work, I was represented to your G—dm—r as an unfit person to have the charge of your further education; you were therefore withdrawn from my care, confided to strangers, and I was left in that deplorable situation described in my first letter of this series of correspondence; that is, my Charlotte, I was deliberately exposed in the bloom of life, to solitude, or else to an unknown and possibly dangerous society. Abandoned by my husband, bereft of my child, degraded by the F——y, I

was set adrift upon the tempestuous ocean of passions and revenge; I was cut out from the moorings of every domestic obligation, and was left no anchor at which to ride at safety from their turbulence. I was a poor victim, who, but for you, would have been instantly immolated. What were THEIR motives, what were their views, what were their prospects, I have already hinted at. I shall, therefore, hasten to conclude this letter, and commence one of more importance and interest.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXIV.

Deprived of your beloved society, my Charlotte, and deserted in a foreign land by my only connections—the connections of my Husband, I ventured to complain. But to whom did I do so? Not to my attendants; no, delicacy forbade the communication, and I obeyed its law! Not to my Aunt? no, because ceremony on her part would stifle the soothings of friendship, and I had already experienced that in the neglect of that Aunt was comprised the neglect of my lovely Cousins, etiquette forbidding them to have any feelings, but to move automatons at a superior's nod.

To whom, then, did I complain? Alas! my child, my complaints were confined to my own Family abroad; and I assure you they were not couched in the language of revenge, but rather as mournful plaints against the peculiar cruelty of my fate.

'Alas!' said I, in one of my letters, to my dear parents, 'Alas! you, my 'dear parents, would have made me 'happy, and you could only make me 'great. How infinite the distinction! 'I am, it is true, the future Q—— of 'E———, yet an exile in my own 'Family. Instantly on my marriage, I 'found myself living in a gaudy pri-'son; my companions were chosen 'for me; my attendants set over me; I 'breathed by rule, and opposed patience 'to oppression, and now, since I have 'emancipated from this illustrious 'bondage, I am pointed at as a theme

'for general reprehension, and calumny
'is invited to attack the most innocent
'of my pleasures and pursuits.'

Letters to this purpose, and to the purpose named in some former communications to you, my sweet Charlotte, were written to my friends in the fulness, but not in the malignancy of my heart. For who is there to say that more than private communication was intended by this indulgence of suppressed grief? Surely the crime was not in the writing such letters under such circumstances; but in the base confederated minds, who dared to violate the trust reposed in them; and, for purposes most diabolical:—to ruin me in the opinion of the Duke and Duchess, who had previously held me in so much friendship and esteem. Indeed the friends of the Marquis themselves soon thought proper to gloss

over this offence, on the score of the intrigue with THE COUNTESS, to whom I had committed the parcel, and as an abettor of a breach of confidence between a servant and her mistress.

But, as I seek only to rescue my fame when it has been abused, and not to veil my real error, which has been alleged against me, I am free to confess, that in the middle stage of this unhappy business, when it would have been most amiable, as well as most politic; when passive obodience would have been the severest reproach, it was imprudent in me to oppose the Marquis: and that resisting, with offended pride, the friendly mediation of the good old Duke of E———h, who anxiously sought to restore family felicity and order, I widened, to the utmost stretch, the existing difference, and engrafted a sentiment on my hus-

band's mind, which destroyed every hope of reconciliation. Yet, the worm trodden under foot, my dear Charlotte, will turn. The conduct of the THE F-M—Y towards me was impolitic, I may deplore my spirit, but cannot censure it!

Deprived of you, as I have before observed, and deserted by THE F-M—Y, I, at length, sought every opportunity to establish my innocency. I appealed publicly to the Duchess for redress. I appealed to the people to protect my child. I drove alone, and nearly unattended through the most frequented parts of the metropolis; and studied every opportunity to remove the load of obloquy with which I found myself overwhelmed.

Deserted by the F-M—Y, I was also driven to the absolute necessity of

looking out for and selecting an entirely new set of acquaintance. That is, my child, I was driven to this necessity, or else to the condemnation of converting my house into a convent, and of doing penance in a country where convents are unknown.

Driven, then, to this necessity of forming new acquaintances and friendships, I took up with such as my neighbourhood afforded me. And, as my neighbourhood was principally formed of naval and military stations, so was my society, of necessity, composed of some of His Majesty's sea and land officers. A——l N——t, S-r S——y S——h, S-r J—n D——s, C——n M——y, C——l R——h, were the principal of this society, and they frequently introduced to my table such other officers of merit, as were occasionally serving at G——h, W——h,

and D——d. But you are not to understand that my society was confined to the men: so much to the contrary, that I had several ladies of the most unblemished virtue and integrity attached to my person; and L—y D—l—s, the wife of S-r J—n, resided with me a considerable time, in habits of the utmost intimacy and esteem.

Mrs. R——h was also often an inmate with me, and the M——ss of T——d, than whom a more amiable and innocent woman does not exist, often frequented my house, and was perfectly acquainted with every sensation of my heart and every desire of my mind. But as this society, amiable as it was, could have nothing to do with the affections, and as the affections must have an object, I became the patroness of a poor little boy, whom I had often admired, and who had been

repeatedly pointed out to my attention by Mrs. R——h, and whom I often encountered both in my rides and walks. On her urgent solicitation, I at length finally took this little boy from his friends, who were represented in contracted circumstances. I found that my attentions to him soothed me, my Charlotte, in some measure for the loss of you; for your absences were so studied and so long, that I considered you nearly lost to me, and I absolutely required the aid of this innocent little object, to fill up the languid moments of a life so destitute of consolation and hope.

Indeed I became immoderately fond of this little cottager, whose name was W——m; he had your usual attendance attached to his nursery, and when I went out in my carriage to take the air, or merely for a morning's ride, I

usually took him along with me, and took every possible care to bring him up in habits of attention and health.

It is natural to suppose, that the gentlemen whom I have named as my frequent visitors, were delighted with this charming infant, and that they amused themselves with playing with him whenever I suffered him to leave the lady who had him particularly in charge.

Of those who paid him the most marked attention, was C——n M——y: and so grateful was the little W——m to this gentleman for his liberality and kindness, that he entertained for him the fondest affection, and distinguished him from all other visitors. Thus did the little W——m become an object, if possible, of interest in my family. Some playing with

his curly hair, others playing tricks to amuse his fancy, while I often kissed his ruddy cheek, and often repeated, that he should some day or other, "make a great noise in W———r H-ll;" meaning that he should be brought up to the bar. Adieu, dear Charlotte, I am engaged at this hour

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXV.

The circumstances of my attention to the little boy, mentioned to you, my lovely Charlotte, in my last letter, and other circumstances industriously buzzed about by report, aroused certain conjectures; those conjectures engendered suspicion, and, in process of time the p—r—t—e of the little W———m was not merely doubted, but boldly attributed to me.

These circumstances, improbable and outrageous as they were, occasioned "The F—m—y" once more to assemble and debate on the importance of the future inheritance to be established in

the manor and appendages of the House of E———l.

When L—d E——d waited on me with the intimation of the Enquiry about to take place, and informed me that it would be necessary to examine my servants, I felt proud and happy at the declaration, and, that their dependence on me might not be suspected to influence the truth, I told him,

"FROM THIS MOMENT I DISCHARGE MY HOUSEHOLD!"

And I kept my word, by giving instructions to that effect before he left my house. I did so discharge them, even at the instant;—there was no time for bribery, and even if there had, and bribery had been practised, will any one believe, that out of the many persons necessary to such an establish-

ment as mine, no one should be found unmindful of his trust?

On the contrary, I insist that the very mystery in which the affair has been involved, would have set every tongue in motion. There being a degree of self-importance attached to the discovery of a secret, that little minds cannot resist; nay, if there had been secrets, they might have been SOLD at a high price; but no such tales were ever whispered among my people, and, without meaning to produce that effect, my reputation rose to its proper standard from the instant I discharged them my house.

And here, my dear child, let me excite your admiration by informing you, that, although your father must have been wounded and perplexed by such reports, still he refused to be a

party in "THE F—M—Y" consultations, resolving that the establishment of my guilt or innocence, should not be weighed down by his personal influence or resentment!

As to the rest, I will not detail what passed on the occasion, but I do not hesitate to aver, that the enquiry instituted for the purpose of criminating me, closed by establishing in the most complete and incontrovertible manner, the strongest conviction both of my sufferings and innocence. Not that the Enquiry was conducted as it ought; it was conducted by a self-nominated com———n, not countersigned by the K—, and consequently illegal. Incorrectness and mystery seemed to have gone hand in hand, and a malignant delicacy presided over the tribunal!

I was tried without a trial, arraigned without an accuser, and acquitted without a jury; and when this com—ss—n ascertained my innocence, they suppressed their proceedings, and were content to remit them to me in manuscript, together with a notification, that they had informed "THE F——Y" that they had discovered nothing to prevent me from enjoying their utmost dignities and affection.

The evidences were called by the C—mm—ss—rs who conducted the Enquiry, and it was found, my dear Charlotte, that the evidences and the charges contradicted themselves, and the whole turned out to be a vile and criminal plot, laid and directed by "THE COUNTESS" for the express purpose of opposing your S-cc——n, of effecting my ruin, &c.

The anonymous letters which are contained in one of the charges brought against me were proved to be the composition of C——l and Mrs. R———, who, it appeared, was introduced to my attention for the direct purpose of assassinating my character; and letters signed with the signature of S-r J—n and L—y D. were proven to have been written at the instigation of "THE COUNTESS," for a like design,—that of depriving me of honor, perhaps of existence, and of bestowing *the S-c——n*, by this means, on L—d F——k, L—d E———d, &c. from whom she had the weakness and presumption to expect the highest rewards and dignities in their power to bestow.

But why should I weary you and exhaust myself by depicting the motives of the slanderous imputations, which have rendered me thus wretch-

ed?—Look to the conduct of the C—mm—ss—rs themselves!—From anonymous letters, and from the instructions of anonymous accusers, they exhibited against me no less than twenty distinct charges of implied licentiousness and infidelity. And what was the result?

Were not the C—mm—ss—rs expressly appointed to enquire into the truth of the reports circulating against me, in order that they the C--mm--ss-rs might state the facts and the evidence on which a public and *legal* trial might, and would, have been appointed? And, had they discovered the facts and evidence which it was thought would instantly arise out of the enquiry into the reports, was it not their duty to state the facts and the evidence required for the appointment of such a trial? It was their duty; and, we must either be-

lieve they failed in such duty, or that no facts and evidence, or shadow of facts and evidence, came before them.

Well! be this as it may, and be the accusers whoever they may be, the C—mm—ss—rs adjudged the case referred to them; and, after having made an unequivocal Report of their proceedings, they concluded the Report with this emphatic observation———

"We entirely acquit the P———ss "of H———h, and conceive that her "accusers would have been punishable "for libel, but that it generally appears "that they instituted the Enquiry to "satisfy posterity as to the S-cc——n, "and, in other respects, to advance "the good of the N——n."

The F—m—y immediately called a

meeting to receive and to confirm the Report of the C—mm—ss—rs, and it was officially intimated to me, that, "ALL DOUBTS BEING REMOVED," I was entitled to re-appear at C—-t, and that such re-appearance would be most pleasing to my relatives, and most grateful to the N——n at large.

I did re-appear; but finding my reception not to correspond with the feelings of an honorable and delicate mind, I remonstrated with the New M———y which just at that time came into power;—I told them that the result of the secret investigation, though it established my virtue, had not redeemed my honor; that my accusers had maliciously entered into and contrived, a vile and atrocious conspiracy to vilify my character; and that although the C--mm—ss—rs appointed

to enquire into the Reports, entirely acquitted me, my only consolation was, to be told that I was at liberty to reappear at C—-t. To this I added, that, the C-mm—ss—n closed, the C--mm--ss—rs were bound to give the N——n, *whose right it was to demand*, an unequivocal Report of its proceedings. It was not enough, that the question of S—cc——n was set at rest, the N——n had a right to know "why I was accused, by whom accused, and how guiltless."

In consequence of this strong remonstrance the new M———y resolved to remove the unfavourable impression which hung over me, and they accordingly procured a revival of the whole circumstances to be laid before the P—y C——l, expediting their own decided opinion thereon.

The opinion of the P—y C——l was given as conclusively as favourable for my reputation as for your welfare. The P—y C——l peremptorily denied that the charges brought against me, according to the Report of the C-mm-ss—rs, were of a nature to subject my conduct to a more severe investigation; and having dismissed the same as frivolous and vexatious, they advised the New M——rs to recommend "THE F-M—Y" to receive me at C——t in the manner due to the dignity of my *station*.

But there were still engines at work to undermine my happiness; for, although the good Duke wrote circular letters, with his own hands to all my relations to receive me at St. J——s's with every testimony of respect and kindness, still were some of them absent, and the remainder of them, with the exception of L--d W—m H——y, cold and indifferent.

As an instance of this—at the taking place of an annual festival, at which it was the custom of "THE F-M—Y" to throw open their doors to visitors, I reluctantly attended,—my invitation was as peremptory as pressing.

That my restoration to c—t and to unsullied fame, was dear to the people, their united and repeated acclamations fully testified. Even the anti-rooms, crowded by nobility, echoed in defiance of c—t etiquette, with the cordial plaudits of the company as I passed to the drawing-room.

And what were my feelings on this occasion? Not those of triumph, but of gratitude! Gratitude to a nation, who supported an unprotected alien with its countenance in the hour of trial, and hailed her with rapture at the hour of acquittal.

Yet private pique exerted all its influence to cloud this brilliant triumph! Almost every individual of "THE F-M—Y," were prevailed upon to absent themselves on that day, and my cold-blooded accusers, taking advantage of this absence, of this marked neglect, exultingly exclaimed——

"Where is the P——? Where are "his brothers? Where is L—y F——k "on this momentous occasion?

"Would not a *convinced* husband "partake in the restoration of a wife's "honour? Would not his relatives "eagerly flock around an injured female "to cheer her with their congratulati-"ons, and ornament her triumph with "their presence? Yet, her warmest "advocates must surely find it very "singular, that her husband should "chuse this particular day to drive to a

" neighbouring race course; and that " all his brothers, except L—d W. " H—y, should also find particular en- " joyments to prevent their partaking " in this grand and national mental " festival ?"

If any argument were wanting, my dear girl, to strengthen my cause, and to convince the world of the injustice done to me, it would be found here in this very proceeding. For it proves that I was received in opposition to the individual and collective hatreds and jealousies of " THE F—M—Y."

And it proves, that this public acknowledgment of my innocence, on the part of the D———, in the presence of all her nobles, was an extorted compliment which the superior majesty of justice commanded to take place.

At all events, the reception afforded to me by the Duchess, the affability with which I was acknowledged by the P—ss—es, and the unparalleled enthusiasm of the C——t, are evidence, combined with the decision of the P—y C—l, not to be controverted by any other authority: they are evidence as powerful as the seal on Shylock's bond, and which I hold up to my accusers——

"Till thou can'st rail the seal from off my bond,
"Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud."

Confident that these evidences from "The Book," will be satisfactory to my Child, they are given with pleasure by

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXVI.

Afflictions of a domestic nature, also, about this time, my dear Charlotte, called on the warmest consolations of "The F—m—y."

I had recently lost my Father!!

The death of the Duke of Hasburgh was a national calamity. Every Englishman deplored the event; and if the sympathies of millions could have communicated consolation to me, I should have been consoled.

This was impossible.

The friendly task devolved upon my family connections in this country:—

they mourned for the dead, but it seems, that some circumstance, unknown to me, hindered them from attempting to soften the distresses of the living.

Such are c—tly sensibilities!

On this melancholy occasion, it became the wish of my widowed mother to return to E——d. She expressed those wishes to her brother the Duke, and apartments were prepared for her reception.

Some private arrangements, however, protracted her return. My accusers immediately said, that she would not come to this country, because it would be too severe an addition to her domestic sorrows to witness the disgrace of a fallen daughter.

This was another most unmanly perversion of facts.—She did come,—and like a Roman matron, to bless the gods, and to weep with joy over the triumphs of her child.

The first time I appeared at the d——g-r——m, with my revered mother, I was attended by my faithful friend, Lady T—sh—d, who had been remarkable in her attachment to me from my arrival in this country; and, more particularly so, during my late sufferings. L—d W—m H—y, who awaited our arrival, escorted us into the d——g-r——m, and presented us to the Duchess of Edinburgh.

Our arrival, in the first instance, at the garden-gate was marked with general and cordial demonstrations of joy by the people; our reception was truly flattering; and the most distinguished

among the nobility awaited in the anti-rooms to testify their heart-felt congratulations as we retired from the presence, and I was greeted, in that pointed and particular manner, which convinced my mother that all the charges she had heard advanced against me, were nothing more than a horrible tissue of infamous fabrications.

What a triumph to me!—What a happiness to my mother!—What an humiliation to our enemies!

My mother was much affected with these public marks of approbation and general esteem; so much so, that she could not resist assuring me, that although my dress was ornamented with a rich display of brilliant ornaments, the lustre of virtue and honor which beamed round my person, exceeded the dazzling blaze of my jewels, and ap-

peared infinitely more captivating in her eyes.

But it was not so with me. My heart was ill at ease.

The conduct of some of my illustrious relations, still afforded opportunity to distempered minds so as to make my life teem with shame and misery.

By the instructions of the Marquis I was forbidden at W—— H——se, and denied a passage through the Court yard of C—— H—se, and so much was I a stranger to "THE F—M—Y," that on C——t days, I dressed at L—y S——d's.

This conduct extended itself again to the Duchess of Edinburgh. It happened that when her b—th-d—y claimed the annual tributes of filial respect

from her children, and when the Marquis, and you, my Charlotte, and his brothers and sisters, were all assembled in commemeration of a beloved parent's birth, I ALONE WAS ABSENT:—uninvited; this spoke volumes to my disgrace.

A similar stigma was fixed upon me at an entertainment given in B—ks—re, by L—y F———k on a similar occasion. The mild, the amiable, the humane L—y F———k, who gives the tear of pity, and the alms of benevolence, to all suffering humanity, felt herself, in propriety, compelled to neglect inviting me to her party; this was another volume spoken to my disgrace! To my disgrace! No; I deceive myself. No, certainly; not to the disgrace of persecuted innocence; but, if disgrace must be the attendant of stu-

died insults, it must be attached to others!

When the page of history shall record these circumstances to after ages; when party spirit, and unnatural hatreds, shall have no influence, and candour alone shall appreciate acts; how fallen will their characters appear in public estimation, who thus deliberately could stab me to the heart, and mock the agonies they inflicted?

Is it, my child, that "THE F-M—Y!" was forgetful of the decorum due to my sex as well as to my exalted station in the country, that they thus listened to my envenomed slanderers?

What! I had the privilege to appear at C——t, because the P——y C——l pronounced the charges against me unfounded and vexatious, but I was ex-

cluded from the confidence of my husband, and from the private and affectionate parties of "THE F-M—Y!" Was this a vindication of my conduct?

Smarting under the effect of such proceedings, and disgusted with the public men who had hitherto conducted my cause, I resolved to appeal to the Duke, from whom I knew from experience, that I should receive both humanity and justice;—I therefore wrote to him several letters, and received as many replies, the substance of which I may possibly give in my next.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXVII.

Never so clearly, my Charlotte, as in the instance of my appealing to the justice and humanity of my Uncle, have I observed that safeguard which Providence has placed in our nature for our prosperity and protection.—Such is the imperious dominion with which truth and reason wave their sceptre over the human intellect, that no solicitation, however artful, no talent however commanding, can reduce it from its power or from its allegiance.

In proportion, then, to the humility of our submission to its rule, do we rise in some faint emulation of that ineffable and presiding divinity, whose characteristic attribute is to be coerced and

bound by the inexorable laws of its own nature, so as to be all-wise and all-just from necessity rather than from election.—You have seen this, my daughter, in my accusers, most peculiarly and strikingly illustrated.—You have seen them attack me with malignity, and when repulsed or defeated, you have seen them take refuge in the resources of infamy, and hide from the overwhelming difficulties with which they saw themselves surrounded.—But no sooner did I appeal to my Uncle; to the justice and humanity of my Uncle, than their guilt, their delinquency and their degradation became apparent, and the measure of their iniquities were weighed against the wounds, the injuries, the agonies of heart which I had so long sustained.

But, it is necessary that I should proceed more minutely.—In my appeal

to my Uncle I complained of the manner of investigating the reports which were so industriously circulated against me.

The results of the mysterious enquiry were never circumstantially laid before the public; and I felt the mode of proceeding against me to be an infringement on the sacred laws of a country, whose constitution had hitherto been the general theme of envy and admiration among all polished nations of the earth. That I considered it a kind of star-chamber act, which made me convinced that civil or moral wrong might be tried in E——d without an open court and free discussion; that a subject might be arraigned without being either condemned or acquitted, and that slander might heap injuries on the innocent, without being amenable to chastisement!

And I concluded my appeal by affirming, that the whole course of proceedings argued a wantonness in the accusers, at which humanity must shudder; it shewed a bitterness of mind, at which those accusers should blush within the retirements of their closets, and it betrayed a want of justice, which an honorable people must impeach with their voices, and detest in their hearts.

That, in consequence, I implored, that the proceedings of the C-mm-ss—rs and of the P—y C——l, might be made public, or that I might be tried by a jury of my P—rs, by whose united voice, I should either be condemned or acquitted. That I claimed this latter right on the principle, that every subject is equally amenable to this glorious test of conscience; in which character I was equally entitled

to the justice of a trial with the poorest individual of the realm.

That is, if I had erred, why not try me by my P—rs?

If guilty, why not proclaim my guilt?

If falsely accused, why not bring to punishment the assassins of my honor?

The dignity of the country demanded this explanation!

The friends of my husband, jealous of his honor, wished this explanation!

Humanity wept, the insulted laws trembled, and public confidence would exile itself, till the nation had this explanation!

It must surely be needless to inform you, my dear Charlotte, you, who are so well acquainted with the justice and humanity of my Uncle, that he had the goodness to pay the most lively and sincere attention to this appeal. In his reply, he had the kindness to make me the most sacred assurances of justice and support—but speaking of my desire of publishing the proceedings, he says——

"I agree with you, there is not any "law, usage, or custom, in G——t "B——n, so blessed in its constitu- "tion! to prevent a female, of what- "ever rank, whose conduct has be- "come the subject of legal enquiry, "from insisting that the official result "of the enquiry, should be laid be- "fore the public. In private life, more "particularly, this argument holds. "The liberty of the press affords the

" humblest individual an opportunity
" of exposing its wrongs, and of ap-
" pealing to the high tribunal of pub-
" lic justice, in vindication of a wan-
" tonly insulted reputation; but in your
" case, it is necessary to be guided by
" certain forms; and it would be high-
" ly indelicate, in the present instance,
" to publish minutes of an enquiry,
" which neither I, nor the Marquis,
" nor the P—y C——l, have thought
" it necessary to expose."

And, on the subject of a trial, my most gracious Uncle spoke thus——

" You should be satisfied with the
" irreproachability of your own con-
" duct, which stands confessed by its
" being intimated to me that the
" C-mm-ss—rs and the C——l una-
" nimously and fully acquit you, not
" only of a criminal, but even of an

" indecorous conduct. How, then,
" can a trial be instituted? However,
" to gratify your feelings, I shall order
" the enquiry to be printed for the
" information of THE F-M—Y, and I
" will, myself, assemble *The F-m—y*
" and *the parties*, and revive the whole
" investigation."

I shall only stop to tell you, my Charlotte, that this design was put into the most successful operation, but I cannot just now pursue the subject. Shortly I shall.

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXVIII.

My generous and illustrious Uncle, had no sooner formed the resolve, of revising the proceedings of M———rs, C-mm-ss—rs, and C——l, on the charges of my accusers, than he put it into execution, and, at the same time, wrote letters with his own hand, to every member of his Family, directing them to attend him at W——r on a stated day.

The day came; the entire of "THE F-M—Y" were assembled. They were composed of fathers, brothers, husbands, wives, sisters, children, and friends. The proceedings on the subjects of the REPORTS and the Enquiries

were attentively read. Each individual was as attentively examined, and the motives of those who refused me their good opinion and public countenance were accurately investigated and defined.

The result was, that it evidently appeared, that every person who had opposed me, acted upon the strength of the strong representations which were perpetually made to them of my misconduct and guilt. My Aunt declared, with tears in her eyes, that the whole of her conduct to me was governed by the sole intention of establishing my innocence, or of seeing justice done to her own immediate offspring: my female cousins declared, that to see me innocent, or to see their brothers in possession of those rights which my guilt would forfeit, was all they had in view; and the

L—ds F——k, E——d, &c. avowed upon their sacred honor, that they never would have denied me their friendship, had they not been assured from authority, that the *S-cc——n*, without it devolved upon one or other of them, as the case might be, would undoubtedly have become contaminated.

Here my Uncle, with firmness and propriety, called upon each and all for those authorities and evidences upon which they maintained their opinions; and each and all with equal candour and firmness, exposed those authorities and evidences, which, as was before manifest from the proceedings of the M———rs, the C-mm-ss—rs, and the C——l, were composed of anonymous and other calumniating letters, vague reports, and the assertions and insinuations of persons, whom, it appeared,

"THE COUNTESS" had associated in her designs.

Every individual of THE F-M—Y acknowledged the impropriety of acting upon such evidence; they assured my Uncle of their sorrow for having been led by so much error and artifice, and they fully assented to the fact, that of the twenty direct charges submitted to the consideration of the C-mm-s-s—rs, one only appeared to impeach my innocence and truth. And they volunteered in assuring my Uncle, that if that ONE charge turned out as calumniating and infamous as the other nineteen, they would cordially unite with him, and accord me every testimony, both in public and in private, of the most perfect esteem and support.

"And what is the nature of that "charge?" demanded my Uncle, "tell

" ate its nature, and I answer for it,
" you will have satisfaction on that
" head."

To this L—d E——s, speaking for the rest, replied—" It is the eighteenth " charge, which states that a stranger " resided in a cottage at B———h for " a length of time; that he frequently " went disguised and armed to the " residence of the P——ss, and that " during the investigation he abruptly " disappeared. He has however since " returned to the same cottage, and to " the same course of life, from which " we imply intentions of intrigue."

L—d E——s having concluded, my Uncle looked to me for the *eclaircissement* of this mysterious charge. I was confounded and silent. Every countenance betrayed a suspicion of my knowledge of the man; but I soon re-

covered strength to assert my total ignorance of the transaction, and invited my accusing cousins to come with me to the H—th, and there sift to the bottom the mysterious affair. The invitation was accepted, and I left my Uncle and Aunt with a confidence and satisfaction, that could only spring from the innocence of your

CAROLINE.

LETTER LXIX.

At the command of my Uncle; my entreaty, and the importunity of my cousins, F———k, E———d, and F———s,— the Marquis consented to be of the investigating party, and to visit the H———h without delay.— He arrived with the relatives above named, and seeing little probability of meeting the "STRANGER," the Marquis and L—d F————k remained with me, while the other two brothers went to the cottage to interrogate the "STRANGER" on the subject of his haunting my residence, and of visiting so frequently the immediate place of my abode. But they did not find him at home; he had walked out. How-

ever, as they had entered the cottage during the time of their enquiry after him, they discovered, what to them appeared the most ample testimony. They discovered MY MINIATURE upon his writing table, and sonnets and odes inscribed to "CAROLINE," lay upon the surface of his desk!—Convinced and irritated—they returned to me, and exultingly described the success of their experiment. Indeed they looked upon me as a coarse and vulgar being, capable of forming a succession of fixed and casual connections, joyless, loveless, and unendeared: and with this impression they were about to leave me. But this I could neither suffer nor endure, and I insisted, in a tone peremptory and indignant, that they should stop, while C———l B———, who was of the Marquis's attendants, should go in pursuit of the "STRANGER," and bring him before them to clear up the

mystery, or to confirm them more fully in the horrible opinion they entertained.

I also assured them, that I was convinced, that the conduct of the stranger, his possession of my miniature, and his use of my name, were circumstances associated together for my more final and certain destruction, and that I should not be happy if they departed without seeing the impostor brought before me, and till they unravelled the extent of the conspiracy which I saw entered into against my fame.

Having hastily concluded these assertions C———l B———d returned, and introduced "THE STRANGER" directly into the room. The introduction was so sudden and unexpected, that it occasioned more confusion than satisfaction, and I was so perplexed,

from the novelty and embarrassment of the situation, that I could with difficulty delineate the objects around me, or form a distinct judgment of the passing scene.

I could distinguish, notwithstanding, that "THE STRANGER" was a man of extraordinary dignity of manner and of person. He moved towards me!—At the first advance I trembled; at the second I rose up * * * * * * * * * * Alas! I knew not what followed. With a heart fluttering and vibrating, it seems that I sunk to the earth in a swoon; and before I was well recovered the most afflicting visions swam before me. I thought, too, that all around me reproached me as a criminal who had assassinated her own virtue; and who was the willing instrument of her own infamy!

Roused by the idea of such imputations, and awaking from so distressing an illusion, I opened my eyes. Alas! I opened my eyes, to discover a still more excruciating reality—to discover that I was supported in the arms of *Algernon!* and who was caressed, at the same time, by the little boy, W———m, who had followed him into the room, —saluting him by the endearing name of father!

Here, was no illusion! here, was no conspiracy of "THE COUNTESS!" Here was a palpable fact; my favorite boy claimed a father, and in that father's arms, I was seen sustained in silent agony and apparently criminal confusion of mind!

What part had the Marquis to take? Certainly but one part—to summons his friends and instantly leave the apart-

ment. And this he would indignantly have done, had not Algernon abruptly rose from his seat, and, advancing to the door which he shut, addressed the Marquis in these words:——

" No, Sir! you have sought for, and " sent for me, and I must be heard.— " Stop, therefore, and attend to me. " Stop! or you will commit against " this illustrious woman the greatest " crime that can be perpetrated against " a being of an amiable heart—that of " suspecting its virtue.—Before, there- " fore, you expose her fate to the " dreadful risque of your jealousy or " suspicion, in mercy to yourself, to " her and to your daughter, stop, re- " flect, and hear me!

" But by what topics," continued Algernon, with an expression of resentment on seeing the Marquis wave

to his friends to follow him, which was prevented by Algernon's being immediately against the door, " by what to-
" pics can her cause be pleaded to an
" heart that repels her, to a judgment
" in which she has never been valued
" or respected. Believe me, Sir, be-
" lieve a soldier, there is nothing in her
" conduct but what claims from you
" the most kind and exalted sentiments
" of tenderness, devotion, and respect;
" there is nothing in it in which the
" most fastidious rigour cannot find
" more subject for sympathy than
" blame.—She knew nothing of my
" residence at the H——h; I never
" wished nor dared to make that resi-
" dence known to her, and as for this
" innocent and helpless child, he is the
" son of the brave Prince I.——s and
" of Melina, the friend of Caroline.
" The marriage having been clandes-
" tine, and the Prince and Melina

" having died with the secret in their
" breasts, I took charge of the orphan,
" and, on my coming to this place, to
" enjoy the melancholy bliss of some-
" times seeing at a reverential dis-
" tance, the object of my early love, I
" instructed the boy's nurse to place
" him as often as possible in the way
" of the P——ss. She did so: you
" are acquainted with the rest. That
" is, I succeeded, by this innocent stra-
" tagem, to obtain for the son of my
" friends the protection of the very
" woman who was dearest to their
" hearts.

" Virtuous and unfortunate woman!—
" Did your spirit so associate with her's
" as to leave her no room to regret the
" disinterested sacrifices she made on the
" day of her marriage? Did her soul find a
" pillow in the tenderness of yours, and
" a support in its firmness?—Did you

" preserve her high in her own con-
" sciousness, proud in your admi-
" ration and friendship, and happy in
" your affection?—Had you so acted
" —did you so act, you would have
" perished sooner than have sullied or
" suspected her fame! Had she been
" precious to your heart, had she been
" honored in your reverence and respect
" as she ought to be, your sentiments
" at this moment would be other than
" they are——"

' Hold, Sir,' interrupted the Marquis, ' hold! I confess the injustice of ' my suspicions, but I cannot see that ' the delinquency of my conduct merits ' such language. Do not aggravate ' your noble defence by remarks that ' may excite resentment. Having en- ' lightened my conscience, and touch- ' ed my heart, do not retard my con- ' valescence, by remedies revolting to

the taste.—I see you are by nature bold, and you confide; you are tender, and you love; you are generous, and must therefore be forgiving. I have taken from you the sweetest flower that ever was bathed in the dews of Heaven, and the deliberate machinations of practiced impostors have made me fling it, "like a loathsome weed away!" I am now convinced that she is clothed with every title that can exalt, and endear her to the heart of man.

'Algernon! give me your hand. I shall delight in your friendship. And as to Caroline, I have every trust and confidence in her; and though we cannot live happily together, I will add to that trust and confidence my most fervent prayer to the God of all truth and justice, to enlighten my mind, that I may conduct myself in future, so as to

'preserve to myself, whilst I live, the 'most delightful of all recollections, 'that of acting temperately and justly, 'and of transmitting to my Child, the 'most precious of all inheritances, the 'memory of her mother's virtues.'

This noble and generous conduct had an electric effect on the whole party. I seized and kissed the hand of the Marquis; Algernon did the same with an expression of enthusiastic respect and affection; and, as the torrent of sentiment subsided, the Marquis and his brothers directed a letter to their Father, stating, that the most pure, though hidden causes, precluded the idea of our living together in any other quality than that of friends. Adieu! my dear girl, once more adieu!

CAROLINE.

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